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THE NEW REPUBLIC

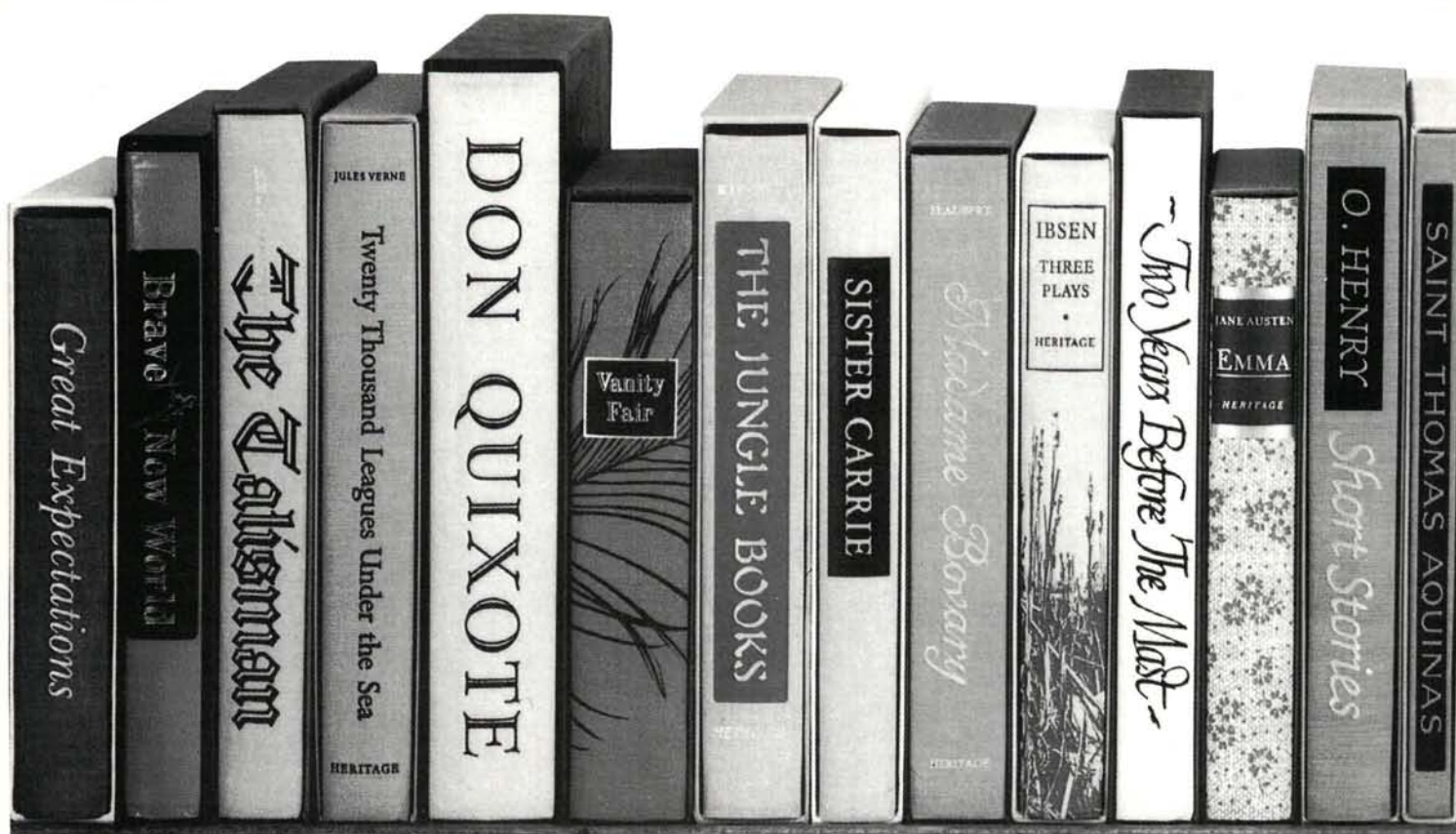
AFTER
HOWARD
BEACH

RACISM
and the politics
of racial
confrontation

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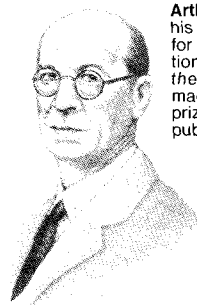
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FROM WASHINGTON

AUSTRALIA'S CUP

Isn't it peculiar that two of the world's most ostentatiously anti-snob societies should be locked in national combat over a yachting trophy? Both America and Australia are sports-mad, of course. The America's Cup fills the dangerous post-Super Bowl spectacle gap. And in both societies, I gather, yachting has passed out of the hands of the aristocracy and into those of Ted Turner-type arrivistes. Neither country can fairly be accused of putting on airs by turning its attention to a boat race. Let's use the boat race, instead, as an excuse to compare the different routes by which the two nations come to their egalitarian spirit. Ours derives from ideals; theirs from experience.

"By the 1830s," writes Robert Hughes in *The Fatal Shore*, his magnificent new book about the founding of Australia (reviewed on page 33), "Australia was as class-obsessed a society as any in the world." At that time, 50 years after its founding as a dump for England's criminal refuse (no longer welcome in America after our revolution), Australia wanted respectability. The "exclusives" (British officers who had become large landowners) looked down on the "sterling" (free immigrants) who looked down on the "currency" (native-born offspring of convicts) who looked down on the prisoners who were still pouring in by the thousands.

Yet Australia strikes the American visitor today as a virtually classless society, achieved without any disastrous leveling down. No Pol Pots here. Australia's income per capita of \$10,000 is close enough to America's of about \$12,000, and there is far less wretched

poverty or great wealth. When you consider that the sunshine and the beaches are free, it's hard not to agree with the sentiment cited by Australian social observer Donald Horne: "In the pursuit of happiness for ordinary people, Australians believe they are already ahead of America." That's from *The Lucky Country*, Horne's 1964 book about Australia whose title became the national nickname.

Australia's achievement comes packaged with a national attitude that combines egalitarianism with freedom. Some small examples from the tourist's world: There's no tipping, except in restaurants. There are no doormen got up in imperial-fantasy costumes outside even the fanciest hotels. Hughes, writing in the January *Vanity Fair*, denies that Australia is truly egalitarian. (What self-respecting intellectual could admit such a thing about his own society?) He also notes, as have others, national habits of conformity and deference—derived from the prison experience and decades of social insecurity that followed—which contrast with Australia's current swashbuckling image (and may, in fact, be fading away at last). But, Hughes writes, Australia's "style is fraternal," and resists the glorification of celebrities and the power-tripping of politicians. "No Australian politician could possibly surround himself with the trappings of recent American presidencies, the manipulation of imagery and the squads of canting flacks, and hope to get elected."

Australia's bourgeois utopia of liberty, equality, fraternity, and prosperity, unlike America's, was achieved unself-consciously, without any prevailing ideology or national founding myth to help it along. Quite the reverse, in fact. As Hughes writes, "The late 18th century abounded in schemes of social goodness. . . . But here, the process was to be reversed: not Utopia, but Dystopia; not Rousseau's natural man moving in moral grace amid free social contracts, but man coerced, exiled, deracinated, in chains."

Of course few of today's Australians can actually trace their descent from prisoners, just as few Americans can trace their own back to the original colonists. The percentage of Americans whose ancestors were brought here in chains as slaves is probably not too different from the percentage of Australians whose ancestors arrived in chains as prisoners. Most immigrants to

America and Australia alike came looking primarily for economic opportunity.

But we take our myths rather seriously. How, then, to explain Australia? A nation with no Pilgrim fathers, no Declaration of Independence, no chief justice shoving copies of the Constitution into everyone's cereal boxes. Australians *really* take these truths to be self-evident: so self-evident they never even wrote them down. Yet out of their strange history has come a society more American in some ways than America.

So what happens to that society when the easy prosperity on which its egalitarian spirit rests starts to fade? Donald Horne observed more than two decades ago: "A nation more concerned with styles of life than with achievement has managed to achieve . . . the most evenly prosperous society in the world. It has done this in a social climate largely inimical to . . . the desire for excellence (except in sport) and in which there is less and less acclamation of hard work." Today many Australians complain that the egalitarian spirit actually threatens the nation's prosperity by creating an "anti-success attitude" that sneers at entrepreneurship and hard work. In a world where natural resources matter less and human organization matters more, bountiful Australia—even more than bountiful America—finds itself being approached and surpassed by crowded, barren nations such as Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Most of Australia's population is descended not from prisoners but from pioneers who came from England during the 19th century to farm or mine for gold. (Hence the derisive national nickname, "diggers.") In his *Short History of Australia*, the country's leading historian, Manning Clark, describes the national attitude that emerged from the gold fields barely a century ago:

If you could not work, you were of no use, and would infallibly sink in the social rank in a society in which physical activity and industry were made the highest standards of a man's ability for getting on in the world.

Yet a generation or two in the Lucky Country seems to sap these juices, even more than a generation or two in the land of the free and the home of the brave saps the juices of young Americans, in the eyes of their immigrant grandparents. The America's Cup may be a race between two lucky countries whose luck is running out.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FOUNDED 1914

ISSUE 3,760

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEBRUARY 9, 1987

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 196, Number 6, Issue 3,760, February 9, 1987. (Printed on January 21, 1987.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 5 & 12, July 13 & 20, Aug. 10 & 17, and Sept. 14 & 21, 1987) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, \$56; foreign, \$81; Canada, \$70. Back issues, \$2.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1986 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call 800-525-0643.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE WATERGATE SCHOOL

To the editors:

The editorial "School for Scandal" (December 29) states, "It is hard to see how the third-rate burglary and the Nixon White House's cover-up constituted a more serious breach of public trust and violation of democratic institutions than the present *scandale*." Watergate was considerably more than a "third-rate burglary."

It began in 1969 when the White House attempted to stop leaks to the press over the Vietnam War (e.g., concerning the illegal bombing of Cambodia) by bugging members of the National Security Council staff and U.S. journalists. White House activities were expanded to include an effort by the "plumbers" to destroy the media, student activists, and others of the anti-war movement. Watergate culminated in 1972 when the Nixon administration attempted to manipulate the outcome of the 1972 presidential election. This series of events led to the first impeachment proceedings conducted against a presi-

dent in over 100 years.

The Iran scandal also appears to involve illegal behavior, but it does not appear to be on the same scale as Watergate, which led to a constitutional crisis. We need to be careful before we rush to simplistic comparisons.

JEREL A. ROSATI

*Assistant Professor of Government and International Studies
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina*

TARGETING 'HALF LIFE'

To the editors:

I was there when, in Stanley Kauffmann's words, "The United States detonated its first H-bomb on March 1, 1954, at Bikini in the Marshall Islands" ("Dark Sides," December 15). At that time, I was a Los Alamos physics experimenter; but much later—from 1972 to 1985—I served the affected people of the Marshall Islands as coordinator and field manager of a suite of official actions to redress a tragic accident. While Dennis O'Rourke was making his film *Half*

Life, I offered him access to authoritative documentation, and offered to cooperate with him in making the premise of his argument factual. Regrettably, he did not accept any aspect of my offer. Thus, his film bespeaks a blatant bias.

Had O'Rourke sought all of the facts, he would have seen that those in authority in March 1954 had every reason to believe that the people of the Marshall Islands were safe. Had he presented a balanced report, he would have shown that, immediately after the accidental exposure of the Rongelap and Utrik people, these officials and their Washington superiors acted responsibly to alleviate the immediate suffering and to mitigate the long-term effects.

Kauffmann asks, rhetorically: "Who cares about these people, really?" He answers, "Not us." For whom does he speak? He does not speak for the Atomic Energy Commission, which immediately dispatched a medical treatment team; or for the many physicians and other health care specialists (many of them volunteers) who have served the exposed Marshallese over the past 32 years; or of a U.S. Congress that has provided millions of dollars for health care and compensation, and land restoration.

The accident had tragic consequences for a few hundred of the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands. But it *was* an accident, and our country has acted honorably and with compassion to deal with those consequences.

ROGER RAY

*Former Deputy for Pacific Operations
U.S. Department of Energy
Bethesda, Maryland*

Stanley Kauffmann replies:

I ought to have mentioned that the government has spent millions on helping the affected islanders. I did mention that, whether or not O'Rourke's suggestion of deliberate disregard is accurate, the results are frightening. The money spent and the medical aid given do not seem to me a reason for pride: they were the least we could have done. One reason that I think we don't really care: we would apparently proceed with testing—somewhere—if we thought it necessary, with more millions ready in case of "accident."

continued on page 49



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 9, 1987

RETHINKING RACE

Legally and institutionally, and in its collective image of itself, the United States is no longer a racist society. The civil rights movement smashed the apparatus of segregation and political exclusion, an irreversible achievement that brought America's civil structures into line with its civil religion of equality and tolerance. That social revolution has continued to score new gains ever since. Perhaps most significant among these is the emergence of a black middle class that has moved out of the ghetto and into mainstream American life. These achievements are worth celebrating. But not just now.

The moment is better suited to other kinds of reflection on the complicated condition of race relations in our society. Recently a black cadet was terrorized by whites dressed in Ku Klux Klan regalia at the Citadel in South Carolina. Black students were taunted and chased by whites at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, a campus that has also been the scene of anti-Semitic incidents prompted by "Third World" students. At Christmas-time, in the New York borough of Queens, three black men were chased and brutally beaten by a gang of white youths, simply because of the color of their skin. One was struck and killed by a passing car while he was trying to escape. And on the eve of the national holiday honoring the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a mob of brick-throwing whites led by Ku Klux Klansmen assaulted an interracial march in all-white Forsyth County, Georgia.

Such repugnant incidents do not mean that racism and racist violence are once again rampant in America. Still, they are a discouraging reminder of the limited influence of law and policy on social life. Although formal institutions and rules now embody America's founding ideals, the informal rules that govern many streets, campuses, households, and individual consciences still do not. In many places there is a lag between society and law, between culture and politics. In such places, particularly in our largest cities, blacks and whites continue to view each other across a gulf of physical and psychological separation. Public acceptance of the principle of equality has not been matched by the full integration of classrooms and voluntary associations. The key that

would unlock all the doors would be integration of neighborhoods. But who wants to take a stand for this all-but-ignored issue from the old civil rights agenda? Black politicians aren't eager; residential integration, in dispersing blacks, would erode their power bases. Whites, for their part, often either resist the entry of black families—or leave once such families do move in—because they falsely associate all blacks with crime and welfare dependency.

Such impediments should not come as a surprise. It is, after all, only 32 years since Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on an Alabama bus; only 19 years since the assassination of King. It takes longer than that for an entire nation to adapt its mores to its laws. It takes longer than that for mutual suspicion and ingrained hostility to give way.

In the broadest sense, then, the challenges posed by the persistence of racial division and racial inequality today are no different from what they were at the height of the civil rights movement in the '60s. Racism and racial animosity are still shameful stains on American society that must be eliminated. In this sense, too, the task of national political leadership is no different now than it was in the '60s. It is to declare often and unequivocally the nation's collective commitment to its creed. Ronald Reagan has not measured up to this task. On many occasions, his administration has been insensitive to the concerns of blacks and succored the worst residual instincts among whites—most callously in the Justice Department's support for tax exemptions for segregated Bob Jones University.

As a result, civil rights professionals have been able to argue, against the evidence, that progress has been slight and remains precarious. In the area of voting rights, for example, they often wrongly assume that if a predominantly black voting district elects a white, the outcome is proof of racist intimidation. Even in our flawed democracy, this is nonsense. And to the extent that there has been some decline in the proportion of blacks in our elite colleges and universities, these activists would have us ascribe it to racism—rather than to the ongoing crisis in the ghetto that leaves more and more blacks less and less prepared to acquire the academic skills necessary to a gratifying and useful life.

All of which reflects the fact that in many ways the practical problem of achieving something that might be called racial justice has gotten more difficult. Politics is the arena in which we attempt to put morality into practice. And the morality of racial politics is more complicated now than it was in Martin Luther King's day.

One ugly factor on the scene is black racism. Take the Howard Beach case. First white racists attacked Cedric Sandiford, then black racists rushed to represent him. His testimony was vital to the prosecution of the white thugs who attacked him and two others, but his lawyers advised their client not to cooperate with the Queens district attorney, on the trumped-up grounds of a cover-up by the police, the DA, and "the white power structure" in general—all of whom were clumsily and falsely accused of being somehow involved in the attack. (See "The Legal Circus" by Eric Breindel, page 20.) To this was added an absurd call for a boycott of all pizzerias in New York (the attack took place near a pizzeria), and then for a boycott of all white businesses. Such demagogues have no interest in racial justice and racial harmony.

These particular calls for confrontation have been

shunned by the majority of blacks and black leaders. They were simply too preposterously irrelevant to the tragedy. But desperation is not always so amenable to reason. In many areas of the country blacks and whites alike have turned their frustrations and resentments into racist acts against recent Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. Some of this has also been violent, and not unlike Howard Beach. In New York and Washington, it has taken the form of boycotting and harassing Asian-owned businesses. There are disturbing indications that talented Asian students are being turned away from some campuses—perhaps in part to disguise the numerically disheartening contrast between Asian "success" and the "failure" of other minorities.

Resorting to boycotts and other such protests may recall the movements of the 1960s, but in a purely exploitative and politically manipulative way. The rhetoric and rituals of black extremism are not relevant to the crises of the black community. Rather, they are dangerously counterproductive. Marching in the streets and punishing businesses will do nothing to surmount the remaining economic and social barriers to the full and equal participa-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This
Week

Last
Week Weeks
on Chart

1. HOLIDAY ON THIN ICE

*

3

Race relations. This year's King Birthday-Howard Beach-Klan confluence brought about a spree of Movement nostalgia and a sudden attention to racism, but the real question seemed to be in what direction a revitalized black politics would go.

2. DIAMOND TOUGH

1

12

Iranamok cum Regan. The political resuscitation of Diamond Don Regan indicates that Iranamok is becoming an assumed part of the political landscape. The public, though unforgiving, is tiring of the story. But more revelations about the *contra*-Southern Airways-cocaine connection could change that in a hurry.

3. RAISE OF THE MERITOCRACY

—

1

Pay raises. Congressional and other federal pay raises play quite badly with growing compassion concerns—the homeless are often raised as more deserving recipients—but this is a sign of what is becoming a permanent mistrust of government leaders, and the low esteem in which they are held.

4. STANDING PAT

*

2

Pat Buchanan. The Buchanan-for-President boomlet may have had the editorial pages in stitches, though it was taken more seriously on the cocktail circuit. The fire-eating Buchanan is out, but the degree to which his candidacy was credible at all is as good an indication as any of the chaos on the GOP right.

5. OUR BROTHERS' KEEPERS

2

3

Compassion. Human-interest coverage of the recent national snowstorms went straight for the homeless, by now the knee-jerk reaction. The elderly, too, are resurfacing (financial problems), as are long-fasting (but ignored) anti-nuclear protesters. The emergence

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

of a politically mature Christian left is only the latest in the resurgence of compassion.

6. NO PERSISTENCE OF VISION

—

1

Movies. Last year's biggest smash, *Top Gun*, apparently led to a rise in applications to the service academies. This year's phenomenon, the brutal *Platoon*, with its strong anti-heroic subtext, is sending some viewers to counseling and has already turned up in political speeches.

7. A HUNDRED FLOWERS DOOMED

*

3

China. Fascination with the current Chinese spectacle derives from the basic U.S. tenet that Communist regimes are structurally incapable of real reform. Thus the fall of Hu, the great white hope of post-Deng liberalization, keeps the story alive, though in fact nobody here knows exactly what's happening there.

8. NO, THE NEW YORKER

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1

The New Yorker. The case of Shawn's successor is playing as if people were really concerned about the *New Yorker*, whereas the country's probably sinking under the weight of unread back issues. This is a story about capitalist-bashing, with Newhouse's management as the villain in a morality play familiar at both the top and bottom of the culture.

9. BORED IN THE U.S.A.

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Advertising. *Adweek* singles out feel-good patriotic ads as last year's "Most Overdone Theme," reporting that people are getting tired of the Reaganite optimism and now perceive them as "mindless propaganda." Sic transit.

10. MY KOUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE

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Amerika. The hype for the *Amerika* miniseries is ubiquitous, with both the revitalized left and the dazed right gearing up for a fight. The reaction to ABC's miniseries will be significant measure of the national mood in Iranamok's wake.

tion of black people in American life.

Indeed, it is far easier for blacks to march and for whites to ignore them than for blacks and whites alike to address the most urgent problem of racial justice today: the plight of the black urban underclass. Blacks are socially split. Two-thirds of them are not poor; there is still a large income gap compared with whites, but the black middle class is closing it. Yet among the underclass population—reckoning conservatively, some four million people—the indices of poverty have never been higher. Social disorganization has led to social pathology. One of the most heartbreaking of these is rampant pregnancy among unwed teenagers: it condemns both mothers and children to the cycle of poverty, dependency, and underachievement that now defines the lives of more and more black people. Black-on-black crime deepens the misery. Homicide is now the leading cause of death for black men aged 25 to 34. These men are being killed in gang warfare, family quarrels, robberies—and simply at random. In Detroit, which is 70 percent black, over 300 children under the age of 17 were reportedly shot last year.

Undeniably, the historical experience of racial oppression is at the root of black poverty today. And the historical fact of blacks' victimization at the hands of whites entitles them to the ongoing special concern of society as a whole. Economic opportunity and the elimination of racial discrimination are still necessary conditions for solving that predicament. But they are not sufficient. "Racism has been the worst, most tragic strain in American life, and it still is," writes Nicholas Lemann in his recent study of the

urban underclass in the *Atlantic*. "[B]ut it and the fate of the black poor since the mid-'60s simply don't match up." The law became more nearly colorblind, government more generous, whites more enlightened—and the misery of the ghetto deepened. The culture of poverty has taken on a life of its own. It was there before and during Ronald Reagan's presidency, and it will persist after it, even if Reagan should be succeeded by the most liberal Democrat who might run in 1988. Now much of the responsibility for that culture's persistence, and for overcoming it, belongs to blacks themselves.

Moreover, the claim of victimization invites counter-claims. The politics of black race resentment has collided with the politics of white class resentment. Whites in big-city communities like Howard Beach see neither their immigrant ancestors nor themselves as implicated in, or helped by, America's historical wrongs against blacks. Rather, they feel like not-very-privileged taxpayers who shouldered the costs of the government's expanding efforts against black poverty in the '60s and '70s. And they see *themselves* as victims—of neighborhood decline that they associate with blacks and of street crime that is disproportionately perpetrated by blacks. They know, too, that Johnny "Rotten" Lester, alleged ringleader of the Howard Beach mob, and his comrades are criminal punks, evidence of a terrible social pathology all but ignored. (See "Inside Howard Beach" by Jonathan Rieder, page 17.) When cast in terms of victimization, debate about racial issues can degenerate into a no-win quarrel with blacks

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WALL STREET WEEK WITH LOUIS RUKEYSER

and whites shouting, "It all started when he hit me back."

Blacks, the great majority of whom reject the demagoguery of would-be separatists and nationalists, recognize that there are more productive ways to advance their cause. They have not been well served by their leaders. At last some of them, notably John Jacob of the National Urban League, have declared an intention to take on the ghetto culture—and to do so publicly in a way that enlists the help of whites. The fact is, however, that these problems will be especially resistant to change. There probably can be no real strategy for dealing with the phenomenon of unwed and teenage mothers other than a vivid morality, which, alas, seems alien to the drift of the popular culture at large. And there is the problem of two mutually reinforcing insecurities. Whites fear that to say the problems of the ghetto must be treated primarily as a black problem will invite charges of racism from blacks. Blacks fear that accepting responsibility for the crisis of the underclass, or speaking of it frankly as a crisis of values and behavior, will encourage the impulse of many whites to wash their hands of black problems altogether.

The persistence of poverty and dependence despite the War on Poverty does not mean that "government programs don't work." It proves only that the programs we have tried so far haven't worked. Government action will have to be part of the solution. The urgency of the underclass's predicament underscores the continuing necessity to experiment with new solutions. (For one such proposal, see "The Work Ethic State" by Mickey Kaus, *TNR*, July 7, 1986.)

But just as important, the role of government is to provide the kind of moral leadership on issues of racial and economic equality that will enable blacks and whites alike to move beyond their outdated fears. National leadership can make white Americans understand their stake in a solution—their stake in ending the enormous waste of human potential that the ghetto's misery represents. And with such a commitment, black leaders will be able to redirect their efforts without fearing that they may be inviting white backlash or white apathy. It is too late now for Ronald Reagan credibly to provide such leadership. A president who thinks that segregation has ended in South Africa should not be expected to grasp the more subtle racial problems of our society. On the subject of race relations in America, his administration has taught largely complacency, and a premature feeling of triumphalism. Which makes it all the more urgent for other leaders to begin.

NOTEBOOK

□ SLEAZEBALL WATCH: Say you're a hardworking bureaucrat whose longings for the trappings of status outstrip your humble five-figure salary. In a moment of weakness, you agree to take advantage of your position and embezzle \$11 million from the U.S. Treasury. You pass the money to a friend, pocketing a hefty percentage for your trouble. Imagine your shame—and worse—if anyone were ever to

discover the deed! There is another way. Consider the career path of Robert E. Lighthizer, former staff director and chief counsel of the Senate Finance Committee. Lighthizer quit Capitol Hill for a fancy Washington law firm. During the tax reform debate, he used his connections to slip a "transition rule" into the bill. This maneuver saved a Lighthizer client—and cost the Treasury—\$11 million. But when the muckraking *Washington Post* broke the story, was Lighthizer obliged to hide his face like some miscreant being hustled into a paddy wagon? *Au contraire*. "Lobbyist of the New Breed" was the *Post*'s caption of Lighthizer's photo. The paper went on admiringly to describe his red Porsche 911 Targa. Another member of the sleazeball community, called upon to explain the success of Lighthizer and others of the new breed, responded this way: "old-line" lobbyists "don't need money, and so they're not as hungry."

□ ACID TRIP:

E.P.A. Finds Lakes of West Are Free of Acid Rain

—*New York Times*, January 16

Acid Rain Threatens Western Lakes

EPA Study Contends Problem Is National

—*Washington Post*, same day

The 'New Yorker' follies.

SHAWN WITH THE WIND

THE SUSPENSE is over. The *New Yorker*'s third editor has been selected, and not by its second editor either, but by Samuel I. Newhouse, publishing magnate and noted hardball player whose family has owned the *New Yorker* since 1985.

The protests from 43rd Street, however understandable in view of Mr. Shawn's stature and longevity, are petulant yet condescending. One hundred fifty-four *New Yorker* staffers and writers signed a letter urging Robert Gottlieb, Newhouse's choice, to withdraw his acceptance of the job; even J. D. Salinger, whom no one has seen since cotton was king, signed the thing. The letter is full of coy politesse; it apologizes at the end for not telling Gottlieb at the beginning that it's nothing personal, and it maintains that the staff was already in the middle of picking a successor when Newhouse so rudely interrupted them. Jonathan Schell likens Gottlieb's appointment to a "coup d'état," and calls the event a "tragic day for American journalism." A coup d'état? L'état, c'est Newhouse, and anyway Gottlieb has been the front-runner for the last two years. Claims of surprise at his appointment must be doubted.

In response to this rending of garments comes Newhouse's statement that Shawn picked the date for his re-

tirement himself. The plain fact is that Gottlieb, who as editor in chief at Knopf has published many *New Yorker* writers, is no slouch—even if he dresses like one. Still, the announcement of Shawn's replacement was a rude awakening. Some at the magazine say Shawn was told on Monday that the announcement would be in the papers Tuesday. Mr. Shawn midwived Seymour Glass and *Eichmann in Jerusalem*; he deserves a better send-off.

So Newhouse was rude. At least we know who'll be running the place. Shawn's efforts to name his successor were intermittent and halfhearted at best. In the past few years, there have been murmurs of speculation about a half dozen candidates, but no straightforward search or nomination. There was talk about Roger Angell (good bloodlines), Jonathan Schell (high seriousness, but *oy*), Wallace Shawn (talk about bloodlines, but what would people say?), Bill McKibben (I hadn't heard of him either; he's a reporter whose article about how electricity and water reach his apartment ran longer than First Corinthians), Robert Silvers (the editor of the *New York Review of Books* and an outsider), Robert Gottlieb (yes, Robert Gottlieb), and Chip McGrath, the *New Yorker* non-fiction editor who was Mr. Shawn's deputy and presumably his heir. Sadly for McGrath and his partisans, Mr. Shawn's support was too little, too late.

The staff has been as reluctant as Shawn to look beyond his time at the magazine. The policy seems to have been to deny that any plans to replace the aging leader were pending. Friends of the magazine endorsed the policy. Last year I attended a talk at the West Side Y featuring several *New Yorker* cartoonists, including Lee Lorenz, the *New Yorker's* art director. Someone asked if the Newhouses' purchase of the magazine and Mr. Shawn's eventual retirement (he was 78 at the time) presaged any editorial innovations. Lorenz replied tartly that no changes at the magazine, either at its helm or in its editorial content, were contemplated or deemed necessary by anyone there. The audience applauded. What were they applauding?

But none of the polite furor over Shawn's retirement and Gottlieb's elevation explains the amount of coverage these events have received, or the unrestrained glee with which reporters are slamming the *New Yorker*. The *New York Times* has given the brouhaha more ink than Baby M or the Super Bowl. Column after column describes the rage of the magazine's City Hall reporter Andy Logan, the betrayal of Chip McGrath, the Gottlieb dress code (informal), the number of people in the 18th-floor hallway when Mr. Shawn announced he'd gotten the heave-ho ("more than a hundred"). Sunny Liz Smith, the *Daily News's* gossip-monger, called the *New Yorker* staff "pampered self-indulgent refugees from the hard world of publishing."

This is more than garden-variety schadenfreude. This is joy at the suffering of a giant. Writers have worshiped the *New Yorker* for generations; even rejection letters from 43rd Street tend to be saved like fragments of the true cross. The braying of the press over the *New Yorker's* turmoil reflects the extent to which reporters are still intimidated by the magazine. I heard a writer say, "When I was growing up, I thought you weren't really a writer unless you wrote for the *New Yorker*." Thousands still agree, and they're getting even now.

The real issue at stake here is not Newhouse's rudeness or how the staff, those tender buttons, will deal with an outsider. The real issue is the post-Shawn issues of the *New Yorker*. Maybe Gottlieb can get John McPhee out of the mountains. Maybe he can get Pauline Kael to belt up once in a while. Maybe he'll talk to Donald Barthelme (about what, I wonder). With any luck, there'll be fewer stories about young women going through resonant mementos in the attic and weeping tastefully. With a bit more luck, the journalistic pieces will get more rigorous or, failing that, shorter. Not that length, the one feature of *New Yorker* journalism everyone seems to dump on, is really the problem. No one complained that "Silent Spring" or "Hiroshima" or "Coming Into the Country" were too long. If it's brilliant writing, it's not too long.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gottlieb probably understands the history and traditions of the *New Yorker* as well as anyone there, and we can hope he understands the place's problems even better. By all accounts, he is a fine editor. But he will need the cooperation of the staff, some fresh blood to mix with the vintage stuff, and more neckties. After all, he is coming to a serious place.

On January 14 my colleague John Buskin and I met with a reporter at the Algonquin to promote our *New Yorker* parody, *Snooze*, and talk cleverly about the Round Table. As we awaited the photographer who was to snap us chewing *New Yorkers* and performing other witty antics, we saw a man in the lounge sitting quietly by himself. He wore a dark suit, nursed a drink, and looked a bit like Melvin Laird, only smaller. "It's Mr. Shawn," the reporter whispered.

Ten minutes later Gottlieb arrived, and the two had lunch. It was then that Gottlieb informed Shawn of his refusal to withdraw his acceptance, a most *New Yorkerly* way of saying no. Afterward, we saw the two of them start to leave through the front door. They paused, then were whisked out the back to avoid the paparazzi lying in wait outside. They walked right by us, Shawn looking tired and distracted and sad. We said nothing, nodding solemnly as they swept past us.

I'm glad we said nothing. Shawn deserves the dignity of as quiet an exit as he would like. The magazine's staff still has a magazine to put out, and the rest of us have to catch up on the back issues we put aside while following this unseemly fuss. Me, I can't wait to dig into the profile of Rosamond Bernier and the two-parter about Milwaukee.

ALFRED GINGOLD

Alfred Gingold's latest book is a parody of the *New Yorker*, *Snooze: The Best of Our Magazine* (Workman Publishing).

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

OIL TOGETHER NOW

THE SPEECH President Reagan delivered last July to the local Chamber of Commerce in Dothan, Alabama, was hardly memorable. But it did have a boast you won't be hearing from Reagan anymore, and he also told a joke about a three-legged chicken. Seems a fellow was driving along a country road and spotted a chicken alongside with an extra leg. He speeded up. So did the chicken. He floored it. The chicken kept pace. Finally, he asked a farmer about the chicken. "That's one of mine," the farmer said, explaining that he raises chickens with three legs to have drumsticks for himself, his wife, and son. How do they taste? the man asked. "We don't know,"

the farmer confessed. "We haven't caught one yet."

After the joke came the boast in which Reagan took credit for plummeting oil prices. Thanks to his farsighted policies, he said, "energy prices have fallen, including the price you pay for gas. Isn't it good to pull into a station today and watch the gallons on the pump add up faster than the dollars?" Indeed, it has been good for consumers: the average two-car family saved \$500 in 1986 due to lower gasoline prices.

BUT YOU CAN forget consumer savings now. Though practically no one in Washington is willing to proclaim it, least of all the president, the administration is firmly in favor of higher oil prices. Not a complaint was heard from Reagan or his underlings when OPEC cut production and drove up the price last year from \$10 a barrel to more than \$19. And if the price rises a few dollars more, you still won't hear public gripes from the White House.

Actually, the administration has favored higher oil prices for a year or more. Only three things have masked this. One is that Reagan lacks a forceful and visible policy to push up prices. Instead, his policy—or, more correctly, his administration's policy, since Reagan has little to do with it—consists largely of yearning for higher prices. The second is that most officials speak in code about oil prices. Almost no one is willing to declare flatly, and on the record, that a price of \$20 or more per barrel of oil is the administration's target, though it is. They talk about "price stability," "a viable energy industry," etc. Who, after all, wants to be the one explaining to the public that higher prices are good for them? That's a tough sell. And third, the price of oil was not rising until recently. This meant that even though higher prices were sought, the president could go right on touting the drop in gasoline prices for consumers. And he did. But no more.

What prompted the policy shift was the grim condition of the American oil industry, the jeopardy this created for some banks, and potential political problems in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, the oil-patch states whose economies fell with the price of oil. Reagan, even while bragging about lower gasoline prices, had to be careful where he talked about the gallons adding up faster than the dollars. "We didn't use that line in Texas," says Patrick Buchanan, the White House communications director.

One strong measure to aid the oil industry and Texas, a tariff on imported oil, was rejected by Reagan a year ago, despite pressure from Capitol Hill and from inside his own administration. It was opposed strongly by an ideological odd couple, Buchanan and Secretary of State George Shultz, who disagree about nearly everything else. According to Buchanan, the argument made to Reagan was simple. "Mr. President, let's face up to it," they said. "An oil import fee is a tax. You said we wouldn't raise taxes. This would be raising taxes." Reagan was persuaded.

Then oil prices dipped to \$10 a barrel last spring. At that price, says an administration official, there was suddenly a "mutuality of interest" between the United States and Saudi Arabia. The United States was eager to protect its

own oil industry from total collapse, and the Saudis decided they needed more revenue from their oil production. Of course, it was the Saudis who had run down the price in the first place by flooding the world market with oil in hopes of killing off non-OPEC competition. But they abandoned that policy without any real pressure from the administration, which could have threatened to hold up delivery of AWACS radar planes. But the Reagan policy isn't that tough. Rather, it consists of rhetoric about free markets and no direct intervention—and no mention of higher prices at the gas pump. Energy Secretary John Herrington and Vice President George Bush stepped forward with the rhetoric. "There is a point where forcing prices or increasing production has political implications," said Herrington, noting that the U.S. oil industry was in "dire straits." Bush, on the eve of a trip to Saudi Arabia, said America's national security was at stake. He invoked a euphemism for higher prices, "price stability."

BUSH TOUCHED ON the argument for higher prices that appeals to Reagan—national security. Earlier, this pitch hadn't been enough to make Reagan accept an oil import fee. But it is sufficient for him to go along cheerfully with higher prices. When an adviser tells Reagan, "Mr. President, there are national security implications here," he listens intently, says Buchanan. The official who has made this argument most noisily is Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. Low prices impel the United States to import more and more oil from the Middle East, he says, and this harms the domestic oil industry. "We face oil shocks unless we avert our over-dependence by encouraging additional oil production in the U.S.," Hodel says. He told the Council on Foreign Relations last November that the biggest shock would come if the Soviets took over the Middle East oil fields. That, he insisted, is a real threat. "We cannot afford the luxury of blinding ourselves to the potential of Soviet aspirations in that part of the world."

Hodel is more candid than most in the administration about prices. (The most candid is Commerce Undersecretary Robert Ortner, who says it's better to have oil at \$20 or so a barrel because that will keep U.S. oil fields in operation.) "These low prices are a blessing to consumers in the short run," Hodel said in a speech last summer at roughly the same time the president was taking credit for tumbling prices. "I keep trying to spread the message as I travel around the country that these short-term prices are just nifty provided you do not count on them lasting." In the same speech, Hodel made an uncanny prediction. He said that OPEC "will reform by the end of the summer" and raise the price to \$18 to \$22 a barrel. The prediction came just after he had warned that low prices were destroying the oil industry and jeopardizing national security. Thus it served as another signal to the Saudis and OPEC that jacking up prices was fine with the Reagan crowd.

The designated successor to Hodel as champion of the national security argument is William Martin, the deputy energy secretary and a former (until last year) official of the National Security Council. At the behest of oil compa-

nies, Martin began a study last fall of the national security implications of oil prices. The "driving principle" of the study, says Martin, is finding "what is right for the nation as a whole, recognizing that a reasonably priced and predictable supply of oil is critical to the American consumer, national economic competitiveness, and national security." That statement is studded with code phrases suggesting the need for higher prices. "The nation as a whole," for instance, doesn't simply mean consumers. A "predictable supply" ordinarily means oil from domestic fields, and it's predictable only if the price is high enough. Martin also talks favorably about the recent decision by Norway to go after expensive natural gas in the Troll Sleipner field. "They could have imported cheaper Soviet natural gas," he says. "They could have imported cheaper Middle East oil. But they've shown they feel that there is some price to be paid for security. We have to ask ourselves: Is there a price for security? How much is the price for security? And are we willing to pay it in a society that values the short-term?" The answers are yes, a lot higher, and probably.

When it's finished in a few weeks, the Martin study will make policy recommendations, none of them striking. Though an oil import fee is to be weighed as a national security tool, it has already been ruled out as both a tax and a tariff. So has a price floor, which would delight the industry but is precisely the kind of direct subsidy that Reagan avoids. That doesn't leave much. Last fall Reagan conferred in the Oval Office with Senator Phil Gramm of Texas and some industry representatives, and wound up endorsing Gramm's bill to cut regulatory costs for oil producers. He'll endorse it again. But with the price of oil having doubled since last spring, the pressure is off for drastic measures. Better yet, the cost to the economy from higher prices is not likely to be large, at least in 1987. Ortner says the consumer price index may rise one or two percentage points. "With inflation at one percent, knocking it up to three percent won't cause blood in the streets," says a Republican consultant. Maybe Reagan's luck is back.

FRED BARNES

Directors cry about colorization.

EMOTION PICTURES

THERE SAT John Huston in his wheelchair in Los Angeles some time ago, nurse beside him, oxygen mask at the ready. The great director was gravely ill, but the occasion was important: he had come before the press to fight the "colorization" of one of his greatest movies, *The Maltese Falcon*, by the evil TV mogul Ted Turner. In a faltering voice, the wizened 80-year-old director moaned that the process of adding color to black-and-white movies

was a mutilation of an artist's vision—in this case his own.

I too prefer *The Maltese Falcon* the way Huston made it. But before accepting the argument that he and his colleagues have been making—and that Ted Turner is the greedy businessman out to commit the equivalent sin of painting a moustache on the *Mona Lisa*—it might be helpful to answer the following questions: Did Leonardo da Vinci buy the rights to someone else's painting of Miss Lisa, and paint her again? Did he take the painting to some preview audiences in small Italian towns and hand out survey cards to gauge reactions, and then repaint certain parts? Did he, looking to make some extra money from his painting, sell the reproduction rights to a museum, allowing the institution to do whatever it wanted to his work?

I know it's hard to acknowledge, but there *are* some differences between Hollywood movies and Renaissance paintings. Paintings aren't sold to TV and hacked to pieces. Paintings aren't produced with dozens of collaborators. And paintings aren't based on ideas optioned by the artist from another medium. Movies are. The director may think he's creating art—but moviegoers don't.

The Maltese Falcon, in fact, is a perfect illustration of how movie directors alter other artists' work for their own benefit. If you compare the end of the 1941 movie version to the end of Dashiell Hammett's 1929 novel, you'll find some differences. Huston's movie ends with detective Sam Spade turning in Brigid at his apartment building; the novel follows Spade back to his office and through a scene with his secretary, Effie, that suggests some further developments—including more dealings with his dead partner's wife, Iva. Huston left this out of his movie—presumably because it didn't work on film.

Wasn't that Huston's right? Hadn't he paid for the rights to Hammett's book, and didn't that entitle him to do whatever he wanted with it? Sure. But the argument made against colorization is that just because you have the *legal* right to do something doesn't mean you have the *moral* right. So why are movie directors above moral law, while Ted Turner is not?

THE REASON is simple, and it has nothing to do with Art—at least as high-minded directors and critics have chosen to define it for argument's sake. The process of converting books into movies has become an accepted part of the business because movie companies have the same thing Ted Turner has: Money. Lots of Money. Starving writers have been selling their souls to Hollywood for years to make an extra buck, and I bet Leonardo da Vinci would have happily sold the rights to the *Mona Lisa* to LeRoy Nieman if he'd come around with a big enough check. Remember, it's the author's choice—and there are plenty of authors who refuse to sell their books to the movies regardless of the price because they don't want their vision mutilated. Saul Bellow and J. D. Salinger come to mind.

They realize something John Huston and his colleagues have forgotten—that directors may have made the movies,

but the studios own them. That distinction is part of the reason movie directors are so rich these days. If Martin Scorsese had to be his own studio—marketing, distributing, and so forth—he'd never have the time to be an artist. So the directors let the studios peddle the movies, and they take home huge fees for making them.

THERE HAVE been dozens of plays and novels over the years that one might consider “mutilated” by movie directors. Alfred Hitchcock made a habit of buying books (*Vertigo* and *Strangers On A Train* are two examples) and changing plot elements to suit his fancy. George Stevens adapted Theodore Dreiser's great 1925 novel, *An American Tragedy*, by slicing off the first third of the book and thereby removing the motivation of the central character. In the novel he's a poor young man desperate to rise above his social class, while in the movie he's reduced to a nerdy guy with a hopeless crush on Elizabeth Taylor. Another egregious example of mutilation came in the movie version of Maxwell Anderson's play *The Bad Seed*. The ending is changed from frightening to happy when the evil young girl is killed off. It's a simple switch—in the play, evil defeats good; in the movie, good defeats evil.

Ted Turner recently splashed some color on one of Hollywood's most frequent literary adapters, Frank Capra. *It's A Wonderful Life* is a great movie, and it looks lousy in color. But is colorizing it a mutilation of an artist's vision? Hardly. Capra bought the rights to a story by Philip Van Doren Stern for \$10,000, along with three unsuccessful screenplay versions of it—by Marc Connelly, Dalton Trumbo, and Clifford Odets. Capra himself wrote and rewrote and restructured things from all four versions until it was precisely the movie he wanted to make. Then, through the distributor that owned it, *It's A Wonderful Life* went to television as a Christmas-time staple. There it has on occasion been mutilated beyond recognition.

If it's so wrong to mutilate a work of art, why do directors allow TV networks to do it to their movies all the time? Again, it comes back to money. Almost no directors have the power to prevent it—because in contracting to do the movie, and in return for a large salary, they give up control over the property. The only director who's thus far been able to halt the editing of his movie by a TV network is Warren Beatty, who retained the right in his *Reds* directing contract to do so—and prevented ABC from broadcasting their edited version of the movie. And why did he earn that right? Again, money. He earns so much for movie studios that they're willing to give him more rights over the material in return.

The outrageous costs and fees connected with movie-making have long since separated it from all other art forms—to the point where directors will go out and ask the public for their advice on a picture *before* it's been released. As long ago as the 1940s, directors would take unfinished movies out to be seen by preview audiences for their suggestions and reactions. Nowadays it's common practice for directors to test different endings to see what “works.”

Frank Oz, the director of *Little Shop of Horrors*, chose to change the ending of the off-Broadway play after preview audiences found it too depressing.

That is not the way a painter works, which is not to say that it's wrong, only that to defend a movie as a work of art is to ignore the peculiarities of the movie-making process. I'm thankful movies aren't made like paintings; they'd probably be a hell of a lot duller. In fact, they probably wouldn't exist. There's really only one similarity between movies and paintings—that when we go to look at them, we decide whether we like them or not on the basis of what we see and feel, and not on what we *think* we should like.

So if John Huston wants to get up and say that he doesn't think colorization looks any damn good, then I'd listen—and I'd probably agree.

DAVID BLUM

David Blum is a contributing editor of *New York* magazine.

What do students want?

THE CHINA SYNDROME

THE RECENT demonstrations in Hefei, Wuhan, Shanghai, and Beijing forcibly remind us that every generation of university youth since the beginning of the century has left its mark on the tumultuous history of mainland China. From the May 4 Movement of 1919 to the generation of the "Hundred Flowers" in 1956 to the post-cultural revolutionary generation of 1986, students, when provided an opportunity, have pressed for the right to political expression.

Efforts to generalize about the "Chinese student" are, of course, beset with pitfalls. Since the early 20th century, only a small portion of the student population has participated in these events at any one time. The students have often been collectively characterized as arrogant, immature, ignorant, bereft of intellectual depth and political judgment, and prone as a privileged minority to arrogate to themselves the responsibility for shaping the future of the society. These judgments, which have been made over time from all quadrants of the political compass (most recently by certain conservatives in the *People's Daily*), are no doubt often true.

The students' motivations, however, are less important than their persistent tendency to claim the right to participate in shaping the political destiny of society. At the moment students are exasperated by the Party's failure to improve the bleak material environment in which they live, particularly since they now know of conditions elsewhere. Yet they link such concrete grievances to nothing less than the ultimate achievement of "freedom and democracy."

Most of the Western press accounts on the demonstrations have portrayed them as an outgrowth of Deng's more open economic and cultural policies. But the tendency of student youth to lay claim to sociopolitical responsibility may actually reflect a cultural disposition inherited from the late 19th century or even earlier. Most of the students would probably be offended by the suggestion that their attitudes are linked to the "feudal past." Nevertheless, the term *xue sheng*, which we translate as "student," is freighted with overtones that link it to the image of young Confucian scholars and lower degree holders.

Those who had embarked on the sea of sacred learning were to some degree already participants in the sociopolitical responsibilities of the vanguard elite. The majority no doubt simply pursued their career opportunities and played it safe. Some were highly skeptical of their capacity to "change the world." Yet there were always those who, for whatever motive, took their roles as leaders of public opinion seriously. They lost no opportunity to don the mantle of a kind of civic responsibility—often at considerable risk. In retrospect, it appears that what they bequeathed to their 20th-century student heirs was not "freedom and democracy," but a kind of tradition of Confucian civic activism.

Traditional Confucian institutions were based on a religio-cosmological authority, but the flesh-and-blood holders of power were often as not regarded by the literati out of office both old and young with coldly secular eyes. The young scholars were not inclined to perceive office-holders as being made of different or better stuff. There was no felt need to believe that the present incumbents in the "Confucian state" actually embodied the Confucian ideal. Thus the modern day Marxist-Leninist dispensation—which implies that the party is a "sacred body" and that the holders of party power embody the infallible wisdom and higher virtue of the proletariat—may be a departure from the sober political cultural expectations of the late 19th century.

If the young scholars of the past took themselves seriously as participants in opinion-making, to some extent they were also taken seriously by the ruling powers. As individuals they were powerless, but as members of the larger stratum of literati, their collective opinions could occasion anxiety and concern. They could be suppressed, but they could not be ignored.

IT IS PUZZLING that the Communist revolution of 1949 did not bring a decisive end to such cultural habits. Although the Communist Party had drawn many of its members from the ranks of students and intellectuals, its leaders now stood high above and beyond them in terms of their self-conception as the vanguard of the masses. The Party had also won a seemingly total control of the educational system. The Soviet Union appeared to provide a model of the future: the state had effectively reduced its own student population to silence, not only under Stalin but under Lenin as well.

As it turned out, both states—in different ways—failed

to quell intellectual dissent. Although the Soviet leadership managed to keep the students quiet, the work of dissident Soviet poets, scientists, novelists, and artists has been more profoundly subversive in the spiritual and cultural spheres than anything yet produced in China. Dissidents have demanded individual, cultural, and spiritual freedom, and freedom from physical terror. Until recently they did not call for a restructuring of the state or demand active participation in decision-making. In contrast, students and intellectuals in China often seem to share the "enlightenment" faith in inevitable progress and the wholly beneficent results of technology embedded in the official Marxist-Leninist creed. But when given the opportunity, they have been only too eager to demand both an expansion of individual freedom and the right to participate in shaping the polity.

AS OF 1955, no domestic or foreign observer of China would have ventured to predict the emergence of critical student initiatives. But by 1956 Mao Zedong and others had decided that China once more required both the talents and the moral support, if possible, of its students and intellectuals. Thus the students were enlisted from above for the Hundred Flowers campaign.

Chairman Mao's willingness to provide a space for student self-expression was predicated on the complacent assumption that between 1949 and 1955, the intellectuals and students in China had been "basically transformed." He believed that they would not follow the errant ways of students in Hungary, whose discontent had aroused enormous anxieties. Yet it was soon revealed that older intellectuals and even some students were prepared to return to pre-revolutionary cultural habits, and to raise inadmissible questions concerning the distribution of political power.

Although Mao turned on the hopeless older "bourgeois" intellectuals, he did not yet despair of the students. They were, after all, young. Under proper guidance they might be saved, and their indispensable enthusiasm and idealism might be channeled to realize his new cultural-revolutionary vision. For a moment, it would indeed appear that the young were genuinely caught up in Mao's vision of them as bearers of the reign of virtue. When they were unable to fulfill his vague mission, Mao again seemed ready to drop them.

The impulse to seek out student support did not end with Mao's death. The Deng leadership, with its unreserved commitment to technical and economic development, has been more acutely aware than ever of the need to enlist student talent and support. What is more, given its own experience in the latter days of Mao's career, it has even partially shared the student revulsion against arbitrary power and lack of accountability.

But from the perspective of successive generations of students, the experience since 1957 has been basically frustrating and alienating. Whatever the differences between the various historic episodes—and they have been significant—in each case the students have responded to signals from above only to conclude that they had been manipu-

lated and betrayed. This was even true of the post-Mao "democracy movement" of 1979. The result has been both a massive erosion of faith in Leninist premises and a revival of the old cultural claims of political responsibility.

However modest the student demands, they are being made within the framework of a strident call for "freedom and democracy." What do these terms mean? Do students understand them? The average Chinese student's understanding of notions of individual freedom—physical, cultural, spiritual—is in all likelihood not radically different from our own. They may, however, tacitly assume and hope that an expansion of individual freedom in China will aid rather than impede general societal consensus and national unity. There is no reason to think that they do not continue to share the nationalist goals of the leaders.

The call for "democracy" implies at the very minimum a decisive rejection of basic Leninist assumptions: that the Party and state automatically and "organically" represent the interests of the people. It also rejects the assumption that Party bureaucrats draw on a transcendental source of wisdom and virtue. All this would seem to indicate some notion of checks on executive power, and some demand for participation in the governmental decision-making process by people outside the established bureaucracy.

HOWEVER, IT IS clear from the current crackdown that the students have pushed Deng to the limits of his forbearance. The demonstrations are obviously perceived as a threat to political stability. Another generation of student youth has proved its unwillingness to stay within the bounds, however ill-defined. Once more the threat to whatever remains of the Leninist mystique and to the collective power of the ruling group has rushed to the fore. The first countermeasures are visible in the search for scapegoats among the intellectuals and within the political hierarchy.

The political positions of intellectuals such as Liu Binyan and Fang Lizhi, and of leaders such as Communist Party chief Hu Yaobang, are not new and were tolerated for some time. Nor is there any proof that they were the immediate instigators of the student demonstrations. The scapegoating is discouraging, but it may furnish a way of avoiding a total repression of student political life. For the Deng leadership the stakes are high. Can it put an end to student activism, thus solving its political troubles at the expense of its other goals?

Between a Leninist conception of the state and a full constitutional democracy lies a world of unpredictable possibilities and unresolved dilemmas. The state may still possess the power to put an end to such dilemmas by massive draconian repression. The question is whether the price of this solution may not already be too high even for most conservatives.

BENJAMIN I. SCHWARTZ

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Fear and racism in white New York.

INSIDE HOWARD BEACH

BY JONATHAN RIEDER

AS NEWS OF the brutal incident in the New York City neighborhood of Howard Beach spread, it quickly developed into one of those ritual moments in which the city exorcises its passions and perversions. When a phalanx of mainly black protesters marched into the town, the demonstrators chanted "KKK, PBA [Policeman's Benevolent Association]," and "The cops and the Klan work hand-in-hand." They were met with white chants of "bullshit, bullshit." Throughout the week, bands of black teens chanting "Howard Beach, Howard Beach" randomly attacked whites across the city.

Howard Beach is one of a string of white sanctuaries that line the southern shore of Brooklyn and Queens. These neighborhoods vary a good deal, but each has been the scene of racial violence. In the early 1970s Canarsie played host to a wild protest against busing, and sporadic incidents of vigilantism continued through the decade. In 1982, outside a bagel shop in Gravesend, near Bensonhurst, in an incident that far surpasses the horror of Howard Beach, a mob of young toughs beat a black transit worker, Willie Turks, to death.

As different as Bayridge, Canarsie, and Howard Beach may be, they are all enclaves of the vast and eclectic middle classes, the kinds of white ethnics who form not only Mayor Koch's core constituency but also the hope of Republican New Majority theorists. They raise the troubling dilemma that has plagued liberalism since the early 1960s: the racial resistance of Northern ethnics, and the problem it poses for progressive politics. According to Roger Wilkins and many others, Howard Beach reflects the virulent racism that has been embedded in American society since its inception. Residents of the neighborhood recoiled from that diagnosis, and blamed the media and black militants for whipping up racial frenzy.

The truth of Howard Beach lies somewhere in the muddy center. Wilkins's verdict is too cosmic, and Howard Beach's view is too charitable. Two conclusions are in order. First, although the climate of racial opinion has improved in the past two decades, racial exclusion is widespread in the boroughs of New York City, and in similar urban communities across the nation. Second, the emotions that sustain racial exclusion may be found not only in centuries of racism but also in the real dan-

gers that presently emanate from the urban underclasses.

Howard Beach is really two separable affairs: a drama of white savagery, and the black reaction to it. There is some truth to residents' version of the episode. The full public crisis would not have ensued if C. Vernon Mason and Alton H. Maddox, black lawyers representing the two surviving black victims, and a group of black leaders had not demagogically stirred the passions of the black community.

One should not, however, confuse a handful of local nationalists and self-promoters with the black leadership as a whole. Surrendering to the temptation to bash Maddox, Mason, and the rest is misguided. In doing so one fails to grasp the context that gives their charges credence and makes cathartic politics compelling.

For blacks the political environment under Reagan has been supremely unnurturing. In Koch's New York, blacks have suffered a variety of rebuffs and attacks. It may be that the six police trying to subdue the psychotic, knife-brandishing black woman, Eleanor Bumpurs, were following procedure or reasonably feared for their lives when they fired a second shotgun blast and killed her. Maybe they would have done the same thing if she were an old Italian or Jewish or Irish lady. When the officers used a choke hold on Michael Stewart, a young black man caught spraying graffiti, and he died, perhaps an accident, incompetence, or class prejudice killed him. Quite possibly Bernhard Goetz was not possessed of an apocalyptic desire to kill black people, and was simply protecting himself from kids who, to anyone with an ounce of street savvy, were obviously intent on doing him harm.

In all those cases, and still others, it can be reasonably argued that racism was not the main or sole culprit. Yet many blacks could with good reason glimpse a common thread and conclude that racial hatred was at work. Even if Maddox convinced Cedric Sandiford not to cooperate with police, it is plausible that white police, finding him in the middle of white Queens, did rough him up, refuse him medical attention, and treat him as a suspect. The 106th Precinct, which serves Howard Beach, is the same precinct where not too long ago young minority drug suspects were tortured with an electric prod.

Running through this whole sorry affair is a more elusive problem: How do groups decide who is their friend and who is their enemy? Like everybody, blacks build up images from fleeting impressions and limited experience, from media reports and leadership appeals. Here Koch was responsible for stoking part of the mistrust of whites that surfaced during Howard Beach, for he has built an electoral base by

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playing to the grievances of the white middle classes. Some blacks may thus be forgiven for not being more effusive over his condemnation of the attack. Koch hectored black leaders for their anti-Semitism and seemed to relish a combative posture toward them that went down awfully well in the white neighborhoods. Whatever the reasons, during most of his administration he has failed to reassure blacks that they were as beloved members of the civic community as everybody else. This was a needless slight.

Howard Beach was only the end of a sequence of events that rightly cast doubt in the minds of many blacks about the fair-mindedness of whites. But that sequence extends further back than the Koch administration. The South Shore communities were bastions of white backlash during the 1960s and early '70s. Fears of political and economic dispossession had something to do with it; so did their hostility to black nationalism, "limousine liberalism," and welfare dependency. But it would be a mistake to see the recent beatings simply as an expression of these resentments.

For one thing, opposition to specific aspects of black insurgency coexisted in many middle-income people with sympathy for black aspirations. Above all, racial tensions also grew out of a separate cluster of class concerns generated by poor blacks and Hispanics. Even as black insurgency declined and race diminished as a national issue, the gritty problem of urban vulnerability did not.

AT ITS most elemental level, the Howard Beach incident involved a handful of hoodlums, spoiling for a fight on a Saturday night. They may have been the same pack that beat a white fireman that evening. The young man who organized the group had been convicted of joyriding in a stolen car and possessing a stolen gun. He reportedly told police his goal in life was to become a mafia capo.

Such kids represent only the meanest expression of a vigorous, if not dominant, strain in South Shore culture. I do not know the Howard Beach youths, but I spent time with teenagers like them when I was studying the neighboring community of Canarsie in the late 1970s. They can be earthy, loyal, even charming. They can also be tough and tribal, and do not prize civil liberties highly. Alert to slights to their honor, they bristle easily. So when they bump up against lower-class blacks in the schools or on the streets, the results are often explosive.

In Canarsie some Italian teens usurped the police role of detecting, questioning, and punishing blacks they took to be suspiciously out of place. Once a group of them spotted a black teenager looking into someone's back yard. After a wild cowboy-style chase, the Italian boys boarded a bus to catch their prey. "This nigger didn't know how to act, this nigger was jumpin' and scared." They questioned him. "You were the one in the yard, right," and the black youth said, "No, man, I didn't mean nothing, I was going to a party." The boys started to beat him. "So we led off with a kick, then I swear to god, rabbit punches to his face, zing, zing, zing. Do you know what would have happened to us in their neighborhood? They would have killed us or something."

The easy recourse to the phrase "nigger" is shocking, and

one might take it as an unequivocal sign of racism. But though some of these kids have an implacable hatred of blacks, others in the same clique have friendships with them. Jon Lester, the alleged instigator of the Howard Beach attack, had a black girlfriend who claimed that he treated her well and that he was deeply affected by the movie *The Color Purple*. If this strikes us as anomalous, it may be that we are imposing our enlightened notions on a foreign culture with its own code of speaking. As one Brooklyn boy who was preparing to take vengeance on "the niggers" explained to me some years ago, "We only bother with the [black] ones that are like friends with us. But then there's always them fucking arrogant ones that . . . if you don't kill them, they'll kill you." Depending on the context, "niggers" can mean "all black people," or it can mean the particular blacks uppermost in the boys' mind at the time.

Clearly, there is a timelessness to these youthful battles, and they go on routinely all across the tense racial borders of the city. Thus, one answer to the question of "why now?" is that the potential for mayhem is always there, and it may be realized by the simple accident of a car that breaks down in the wrong place or by changing residential patterns. Indeed, the growth of attacks in one area may follow a *decline* of racism, as blacks make inroads into communities that they previously could not enter. We should be cautious about precipitous conclusions that racism is resurgent or that Reaganism has produced this result.

But this vision of racial combat as adolescent blood feuding is not the whole story. After all, the violence of young toughs, no matter how unrepresentative of the larger community or of youths in general, may enforce an effective apartheid. Nor can one say the violent, territorial strains are absent from adult working-class culture. Most importantly, the white fear of young black lower-class males cuts across all groupings, young and old, middle and working class, enlightened and provincial. More pervasive than hatred of blacks is a fear of the black poor that is grounded in closeness to the ghetto, the high ratio of lower- to middle-class blacks there, and the flamboyant incivilities performed by a small segment of the underclass.

For decades the people of the South Shore have watched the black ghettos of Queens and Brooklyn inching southward toward them. They regard the broken families, the culture of the streets, and the welfare dependency with puzzlement and contempt. Many Jews and Italians fled racially changing neighborhoods, and they winced as once-intact ethnic neighborhoods such as Brownsville and East New York became dangerous slums. In moments of calm reflection, many will insist on the right of a black family to move into a neighborhood of their choice, but then they will worry, "What happens after the middle-class ones come, my neighbors panic, and then 'the element' arrives and I lose everything." Better to keep all blacks out, even the middle-class ones, some residents reason, as a kind of insurance. Even high-flown humanists from Jewish socialist backgrounds have proclaimed, "Color shouldn't have any place here," and then have backtracked to more practical considerations, "but I don't want trash who will fright-

en me." And so those who are mortgaged up to their neck and higher, and feel they cannot afford to move, may turn their community into a defended place.

Because I am painting with such broad strokes, it is important to keep in mind that white New Yorkers are a varied lot, in their feelings toward blacks, in their capacity to make distinctions among them, and in the language they use to express themselves. Some speak delicately, separating blacks who are "refined" from the lower class. Some, less genteelly, who will say, without embarrassment, "niggers," "animals," or "*schvartzes*," mean lower-class blacks; others really mean to convey dislike of an entire race. Some are so fixated on welfare mothers and crack dealers that they cannot see the rich diversity of lifestyles even among the poor. Still others mix the idioms of class, race, and ethnicity, as when they observe that the Jamaicans, Barbadians, and other "Island people" are "producing people like we are," unlike "the lower black element." When we peer into a community like Howard Beach through television and newspaper accounts, these distinctions are likely to be lost, and our classifications of them seem as crude as some of their classifications of blacks.

Above all else, crime is the primal obsession. Residents of the South Shore swap stories of grotesque incidents, and in the vast majority of cases they know and hear of, the perpetrators are black. If they haven't been mugged or burgled, most people are no more than one link from a friend or kin who has been, and so jeopardy is collectivized and lived vicariously. Crime transforms them from nonchalant strollers into readers of signs, sizing up strangers to detect hints of menace. Underlying all these maneuvers is a diffuse suspicion of blacks. As a Jewish woman in Canarsie put it: "I guess I don't really hate the blacks. I hate that they make me look over my shoulder."

This is the nervous logic that underlies the insistence by some Howard Beach residents that the victims of the attack were up to no good: "We're a strictly white neighborhood. They had to be starting trouble." Did you notice, they have said by way of justification, that since the attack one of the victims stabbed his girlfriend, and was later arrested for procuring prostitutes; that the survivors' story about why they were in Queens is fishy: that, despite their claim to be in search of a telephone, they passed a number of working telephones? Such musings were not confined to the working stiff's out in Queens, but could be heard in Manhattan, in the publishing houses, big law firms, investment banks, foundations. Similarly, for countless New Yorkers, the criminal involvement of Bernhard Goetz's victims both before and after the shooting, plus the screwdrivers they were carrying, confirmed his clairvoyance.

New Yorkers, black and white alike, believe that survival in the city would be impossible if they suspended judgment and treated everyone they met on the street as if they were disembodied individuals, bundles of abstract rights without certain socially determined dispositions. One cost of the initial stages of integration is that it makes the guessing game more difficult. In the words of a New York realtor, "You see, [Brooklyn whites] know the new blacks

have pride in ownership. They tell you that. But they're afraid the [ghetto] blacks will hang around and blend in, and they don't know the good ones from the bad ones. . . . When there weren't as many middle-income blacks, you could tell who belonged in the neighborhood. You saw people and knew they didn't belong."

The feeling of danger creates skepticism about the sacredness of civil liberties, and with it a pressure toward violence. It is not surprising that tough workers who are proud of their prowess in fighting and embrace that canon of plebeian manliness, "Do what you gotta do," sometimes cut through the thicket of formal procedure to administer vigilante-style justice. But even pacific residents who cherish due process may find themselves flirting with alternative means of protecting themselves if they are frightened enough. After a rash of muggings in Canarsie, the congregants of one synagogue applauded a man in a skullcap who declaimed, "The answer is vigilantes. We had vigilantes in Crown Heights, and we stopped the niggers there." An elected official, a man of good liberal credentials, said, "Look, off the record, I carry a baseball bat under my car seat." Another congregant called out, "Club them to death, you have that right." Finally, an elderly survivor of the Holocaust electrified the gathering. "I am locked up like in the ghettos of Europe. I am afraid of people knocking down my door. I still am not free."

FOR SOME TIME now the culture of conscience has been slack in New York City. Recovered from the fiscal crisis, Manhattan enjoys a booming cycle of development. Howard Beach retrieved the other city that barely breaks through the pages of *New York* magazine or the *New York Times*—the city of middle-income whites and striving blacks and the dispirited poor. Living so close to the ghetto, South Shore whites might have developed sympathy for the people who live there. Countless whites did. They too had descended from minorities, had toiled hard and suffered long. Unfortunately, physical closeness often widened the social and moral chasm between them. As abrasive encounters with specific blacks corroded abstract support for blacks in general, their image as victims yielded to an image of them as victimizers. This is perhaps the cruelest of ironies imposed on the poor: they generate the very incivilities that diminish the will to help them.

It is hardly cause for celebration that factors other than racism produce racially closed neighborhoods. The effect on the rights of blacks is no less real. It is one thing to cross the street to avoid threatening young males; it is quite another to chase blacks and beat them and drive them to their death. Howard Beach reminds us of the wish to be safe that links the two, and all the intermediate steps between them: becoming cavalier about due process, warning neighbors not to sell to blacks, celebrating Goetz, trading houses not on the open market but through word of mouth. This is how democratic values are hedged and betrayed by ordinary people in the course of daily life. It is also why a democracy cannot let citizens act out their skittish desire to avoid all risk. □

Injustice for all.

THE LEGAL CIRCUS

BY ERIC BREINDEL

THE HOWARD BEACH affair has offered an extraordinary lesson in the state of racial politics in New York. A savage attack on three black men by a gang of youths in a white, middle-class neighborhood in Queens shocked the city. Tensions mounted with a series of "avenge Howard Beach" incidents involving mostly black youths and white or Hispanic victims. A group of black leaders—led by the lawyers for the two surviving Howard Beach victims—charged a police cover-up in the case. Boycott threats were issued, along with thinly veiled threats of violence: "We don't intend for there to be peace in the city unless justice is done here," said C. Vernon Mason, one of the lawyers.

Governor Mario Cuomo, alarmed by the threats and by the charged racial atmosphere, relieved the local district attorney, John Santucci, of the case. With Santucci's acquiescence, Cuomo acceded to a key demand made by the victims' lawyers and appointed a special prosecutor. But this did not prevent some blacks from pressing for last week's citywide boycott of white-owned businesses. And there is no evidence that anything has happened to temper the confrontational disposition of the "Howard Beach Coalition," the loose collection of black leaders who organized the boycott and the no-whites-allowed rally (in a New York City public school) at which it was planned.

Needless to say, there is tension and anger in the city's white communities as well. The anger is directed primarily at white politicians, who are seen as having caved in to black demands. Letters columns in the newspapers and man-in-the-street interviews on television feature whites wondering why a similar clamor doesn't take place when groups of blacks attack whites. With the full Howard Beach court case still to come, the trial of Bernhard Goetz just starting, and the trial of the police officer who shot Eleanor Bumpurs in its second week, New York is looking at an entire season of potential racial tension.

The original incident at Howard Beach—which Mayor Ed Koch described as a "modern lynching" and as the "worst crime in the recent history of the city"—is an event still cloaked in mystery. No one disputes that three black men were attacked in a white neighborhood by a gang of white youths shouting racial epithets. One of the victims, trying to elude his attackers, raced through a hole

in a fence and out into traffic on a major highway. Michael Griffith jumped into the path of a car that struck and killed him.

But a number of questions remain unsettled. The answers—whatever they are—cannot mitigate the seriousness and horror of the crime. Nor will they likely call into question its racial character. But they may help to explain the seemingly inexplicable conduct, at various points, of both the victims and their attorneys. Although virtually all of the mystery issues have been noted in the press, there has been little speculation about their significance.

The most fundamental unanswered question is what four black men from Brooklyn—Michael Griffith, Cedric Sandiford, Timothy Grimes, and Curtis Sylvester—were doing in Queens on that pre-Christmas Saturday evening. There may be a simple answer. But for some reason, when police asked Sandiford this question, after finding him wandering along the Belt Parkway a little while after they'd discovered Griffith's body, Sandiford lied to them. He said that he and his companions had gone to pick up a paycheck owed to Griffith, and were on their way home when they experienced car trouble. (Sylvester remained in the car while the others set out for Howard Beach.) No paycheck was ever discovered, and Griffith did not even work at the company that Sandiford identified. The reason for their trip to Queens that night remains a mystery.

Then there was the toy gun that police found next to Griffith's body. By the gun was a beeper, subsequently traced to a Brooklyn demolition company. Officials there said it had been missing for several days. They also said that Griffith, though not employed by the company, was a frequent presence at one of its construction sites. Beepers are used increasingly by drug dealers, which accounts for the particular interest the police had in the one found next to Griffith. Sandiford's lawyers later charged that the police initially treated their client like a perpetrator rather than like a victim of a crime. But the beeper and the gun would explain why police, on first locating Sandiford, frisked him—before providing first aid and offering him an ambulance to the hospital. Sandiford, who was bleeding from the head after having been beaten by his attackers, was also asked whether he had any knowledge of a nearby shooting. He said no, described the racial attack in Howard Beach, and then identified Griffith's body.

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Even stranger than the beeper, the toy gun, and the nonexistent paycheck is the behavior of Timothy Grimes, who was separated early on from Griffith and Sandiford. When the gang of whites who chased and beat Griffith and Sandiford first menaced the three blacks, outside a Howard Beach pizza parlor, Grimes ran from his companions in the opposite direction. Grimes told police that he managed to hitch a ride to the nearest subway station, and then made his way home.

This was unusual enough—a fleeing black man secures a ride from a stranger in a hostile white neighborhood. But upon returning home, Grimes did not call the police, or even alert friends to the attack. Rather, he immediately began to pack his bags. His girlfriend discovered him as he was getting ready to leave town. An altercation apparently ensued, and the young woman, perhaps accidentally, was stabbed. Grimes remained in New York.

All of these facts probably suggested to police that the four men might have been up to something questionable before they arrived in Howard Beach—or that they had plans to do something questionable while they were there. The criminal histories of at least two of them doubtless reinforced this view. Griffith was known in the New York criminal justice system under four different names, and there was a warrant out for him at the time of his death. Grimes also had a criminal record.

At the outset, none of this seems to have been of major consequence to the authorities. The police took Sandiford's version of events largely at face value—stalled car, search for help, unprovoked chase and beating—and pegged the case as a racial incident. Uniformed men and detectives fanned out into the Howard Beach community that night. Within hours, 11 white youths were taken into custody. And after questioning some of the whites, police were able to put together a picture of what probably happened that fit well with what Sandiford had told them.

BUT AS THE sickening news of the attack came to dominate the headlines, the Howard Beach case underwent a transformation. Police first became aware of the change when they asked Sandiford, who'd been fully cooperative—first on the highway, then for five hours at the precinct house, and even during the next two days—if he'd come in to examine a photo array, and to pick his attackers out of a lineup. Sandiford said no.

He'd retained an attorney, Alton H. Maddox Jr., apparently on advice from Chris Griffith, Michael Griffith's brother. Maddox charged at a dramatic press conference that a police cover-up was in progress, and he declared that his client would cooperate no further with the investigation. Shortly thereafter, Timothy Grimes retained C. Vernon Mason, who often works in tandem with Maddox. Grimes promptly issued a statement saying that he too would not cooperate with the criminal investigation.

Over the last five years, Maddox and Mason have

become familiar figures on the New York political and legal scene. Espousing the view that racism, and police brutality toward minorities, are pervasive factors in the city's criminal justice system, both have counseled clients not to cooperate with authorities in a number of celebrated cases.

Mason received a good deal of attention as the attorney in the Rev. Lee Johnson case. Johnson, a black Union Theological Seminary graduate student, was allegedly jailed and beaten without cause by police. But after Mason instructed his client not to cooperate with the investigation—as “a vote of no-confidence” in the system, according to the attorney—a grand jury refused to indict the officers involved.

MADDOX HELPED bring about the controversial 1983 congressional hearings, headed by Michigan Representative John Conyers Jr., to investigate police brutality in New York. The attorney was also a key player in the Michael Stewart case, another important police brutality episode. Stewart, a young black man, died after having been arrested by a group of transit police. It was widely alleged that he had been beaten to death. Maddox, representing a witness to the incident, told his client not to testify, which helped the accused officers win an acquittal.

When Maddox and Mason announced that their clients, Sandiford and Grimes, would cooperate no further in the Howard Beach case, even if that meant the case would fall apart, many observers were stunned—and were inclined, naturally, to give some credence to the cover-up charges. Those who knew the history of the two lawyers, however, realized that undermining a criminal case in order to prove the system unjust would be nothing new to either attorney.

What seems to have happened here is that two highly political attorneys arrived at the scene of a very hot racism case, but one in which the black victims may have had “Fifth Amendment problems”—a reluctance to come forward for fear that what they were doing earlier in the evening would be exposed.

The district attorney, Santucci, had made it abundantly clear that he had one goal: murder indictments against the Howard Beach youths who had attacked Michael Griffith. The DA could not have been plainer. And to get a murder indictment, Santucci needed Sandiford to say that he and Griffith had been running in fear for their lives when Griffith jumped out onto the highway.

By refusing to cooperate with the investigation, and by charging a police cover-up, the two victims cast doubt on their own version of events. The cover-up charges centered on Dominick Blum, the motorist who struck Michael Griffith. Blum had halted briefly on the highway, believing he'd hit a “tire or an animal.” Seeing nothing, he said, he had continued on home. After examining the damage to his car, Blum and his father returned to the scene of the accident.

According to Maddox, Blum was part of the white gang

that attacked the three black men in Howard Beach, and not just a passing motorist. Blum, said Maddox, was being protected by the police. Three characteristics made Blum a natural for Maddox's cover-up conspiracy: he was white, he was a court officer, and he was the son of a New York City police officer.

Maddox demanded Blum's arrest and insisted that he be indicted for murder. Maddox also charged that police initially treated Sandiford like a criminal rather than a victim, referring to the frisk. And, said Maddox, the police had ignored the evidence Sandiford gave them concerning Blum's direct role. Thus the "loss of confidence," thus the decision not to aid the investigation.

Maddox and Mason further demanded that Governor Cuomo appoint a special prosecutor in place of Santucci, whom they included in the alleged cover-up. In what must have been an extraordinary Catch-22-like experience, the DA—without Sandiford as a witness—was forced to settle, at least temporarily, for drastically reduced charges against the apparent ringleader of the white gang, Jon Lester, and against two of the other attackers. Lester had apparently gathered the group that night in Howard Beach, shouting: "There's niggers at the pizza parlor, let's get them."

After the preliminary hearing and reduction of charges, an angry crowd of blacks demonstrated outside the courthouse against the injustice of what had taken place inside. Only the "reckless endangerment" counts had survived the hearing. The dismissal of the murder charges, said Maddox and Mason, proved their police and prosecutorial misconduct charges.

The notion that Blum was one of the original white attackers is, in fact, quite extraordinary—perhaps even by Maddox's standards. Blum's post-chase presence on the highway would have been a near-impossibility logistically. He was demonstrably elsewhere when the chase took place (a fact that three companions, black and white, confirmed); he was several years older than any of the Howard Beach whites; and had only once in his life even been to Howard Beach. Though Blum is a centerpiece in Maddox's conspiracy theory, the attorney at one point seemed to modify his charges. He suggested that Blum may simply have seen a gang of whites chasing three blacks and joined in: "He [Blum] would just assume that the blacks had done something, being a court officer."

WHILE MADDUX and Mason advanced their view of the case and pressed their demand for a special prosecutor, they were joined in press events by representatives of the African National Congress and a broad range of local black activists. The particular presence in the Howard Beach Coalition of a pan-Africanist political element was striking, as were the allusions to violence in South Africa, which included such comments as, "There are a lot of tires around the city."

For the most part, this was the church-based black left, with a bare sprinkling of left-wing trade union support.

Aside from Maddox and Mason, the major figures in the Howard Beach group were the Rev. Al Sharpton, the Rev. Herbert Daughtry of the Black United Front, and Sonny Carson of Black Men Against Crack. It was from this ad hoc coalition that the first boycott warnings were heard: pizza parlors citywide and white-owned businesses in Howard Beach were the initial targets.

During this tense period, little was heard from members of the black political establishment in New York. Only Representative Charles Rangel and State Supreme Court Justice Bruce M. Wright spoke out against the Maddox-Mason tactics. Wright, a prominent black radical and long-standing critic of police brutality, said he couldn't conceive of a circumstance in which withholding relevant evidence in a criminal case was likely to serve the cause of justice. Most black elected officials preferred to take a low profile—unhappy, in all likelihood, with the cover-up charges and the boycott plan, but unwilling to differ publicly with the activists.

It should be noted that an interracial group in Queens, formed under the leadership of a newly elected black congressman, the Rev. Floyd H. Flake, came forward with a public call for reconciliation. Even more importantly, the few opinion polls conducted during this interim suggested that no more than half of the blacks in New York believed that there had been a police cover-up. Many more blacks, not surprisingly, saw racism as widespread and endemic. And most appeared to favor the appointment of a special prosecutor for the Howard Beach case.

THE EVENTUAL appointment by Governor Cuomo of a special prosecutor broke the legal paralysis created by Sandiford's refusal to testify. From a political standpoint, Cuomo handled things brilliantly. He apparently insisted that Santucci come to him and ask to be relieved of the case; that the Howard Beach black activists issue statements of support after the special prosecutor announcement; and, finally, that Maddox and Mason pledge the cooperation of their clients. He appears to have gotten most of what he sought, including Charles J. Hynes as special prosecutor. The appointment of Hynes, already a special New York state deputy attorney general responsible for misconduct and wrongdoing in the New York City criminal justice system, enabled Cuomo to appear to have gone somewhat less than all the way in response to the black leaders' demands. The special prosecutor, in other words, was already in place.

Nevertheless, there was no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of either the police or the district attorney. Without it, or some kind of conflict of interest, there is no reason that local criminal justice authorities shouldn't handle a criminal case. Most of all, the appointment of a special prosecutor demonstrates that two attorneys advancing patently ridiculous charges can hold the New York criminal justice system hostage. The impasse in the Howard Beach case appears to have been broken. Whether achieving that result in this manner serves the cause of justice over the long term is an open question. □

Empires are expensive. Can we afford one?

THE PRICE OF POWER

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

I used to puzzle over the question of how American democracy could be adapted to the kind of role we have come to play in the world. I think I now know the answer: it cannot be done.

—William Fulbright

THE Iran-*contra* affair has led to a renewal of the perennial debate about the relationship of democracy to foreign policy. Thus far the debate has focused primarily on one aspect of that relationship, namely: What does democracy do to foreign policy? Specifically, can a democracy, with all of its constraints on policy and procedure, carry out the responsibilities of a superpower? The converse to this question is equally important: What does foreign policy do to democracy? Specifically, are superpower responsibilities abroad an enemy of democratic forms at home?

The latter set of questions is crucial because they shed light on the debate about American intervention abroad. The debate generally revolves around moral and strategic issues: Is the United States a force for good abroad? By what right do we intervene in the affairs of others? Does it really matter to the security of the United States who rules in Managua or Kabul or N'Djamena? The North affair, however, highlights a different question, which has long and powerfully influenced the debate on interventionism: What will full engagement in the world do to the democratic experiment at home? In fighting terrorists and totalitarians, do we not become like them? And is that worth a piece of territory in some godforsaken corner of the Third World?

The concern over domestic effects unites anti-interventionists of the left and right, since it does not inquire into American purpose or the nature of the Soviet threat. It does not matter which side of history one sympathizes with abroad. The point is that the costs of interventionism are too great for the domestic life of a democracy to bear.

The costs of superpower status are many. Economically, leading a vast alliance is a drain on American resources and energies. In social terms, superpower responsibilities inevitably encourage the centralization and militarization of authority. (Defense considerations, for example, drive everything from university education to space exploration to laser research.) And politically, imperial responsibility demands imperial government, which naturally encourages an imperial presidency, the executive being (in principle) a more coherent and decisive instrument than its legislative rival.

"Nearly four decades ago," writes Ted Galen Carpenter of the libertarian Cato Institute, "opponents of foreign entanglements cautioned that America could not operate as an empire abroad and remain a republic at home. . . .

Burdensome military taxation, the malignant growth of an imperial presidency, and the violations of civil liberties during the McCarthy era and the Vietnam War offered earlier testimony to the dangers arising from America's status as planetary gendarme."

This kind of critique of superpower status—that it will drain our economy, militarize our society, and corrupt our democracy—has strong echoes on the left as well. If there is a left-right difference, it is that liberals tend to emphasize more the economic costs of empire; conservatives, the cost to liberty. The American Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on the U.S. economy makes a strong point of criticizing military spending for taking away from human needs. Robert Nisbet, on the other hand, makes the classic argument that underlay the original American aversion of standing armies: that the increasing militarization of American society, however necessary to meet external threats, is inimical to democratic institutions and individual liberties.

These complaints about the costs of empire are not new. Carpenter says the argument goes back 40 years, to the beginning of the postwar era. In fact, it goes back to the era of pre-war isolationism. "An extreme sensitivity to, and consequently an obsessive fear of, the domestic effects of foreign policy has been one of the hallmarks—perhaps *the* hallmark—of the isolationist outlook," writes Robert Tucker. Isolationists believed that "foreign involvement—and above all war—erodes constitutional processes and betrays the American promise. In the 1930s it was this belief that united such otherwise disparate figures as Norman Thomas and Senator Robert A. Taft."

Thomas opposed American intervention against fascism because he thought such adventures would prevent economic reconstruction at home. Taft's isolationism was rooted in the fear that interventionism and militarism would destroy free institutions at home, leading to socialist dictatorship.

The isolationist impulse today also owes much to the fear of domestic effects. That fear, like its interwar antecedent, is often "obsessive," but there is no denying its essential truth. Defending a worldwide alliance does encourage centralized authority, a military-industrial complex, the transfer of authority to the executive branch, and the imposition of secrecy on a wide range of government activities. To the extent that these tendencies limit public participation in and debate on public policy (e.g., the CIA carries out covert actions in the name of the American people but without their knowledge), they constitute a diminution of democracy. It is the price

we pay, in the form of democratic practice—for what?

For two purposes. First, for the long-run well-being of our own democracy. The pre-war isolationists believed that American democracy could survive in a hostile, totalitarian world. That proposition—almost, but never, tested—remains dubious. There remains today a totalitarian threat. Both for reasons of safety and of nourishment, American democracy needs friends to survive. Our alliance commitments, our large military establishment are the product of many things, one of which is democratic self-interest.

And second, for an idea, the democratic idea. Promoting it abroad is an American vocation, for which we have long sacrificed blood and treasure. The constraints on our democracy required for the running of an alliance are another form of sacrifice, a kind of foreign aid program in which the transfer is made in the coin of democratic practice rather than cash. The most extreme example of this phenomenon (precisely what the pre-war isolationists had predicted and feared): to fight a world war that restored democracy to half a continent abroad required the vast centralization of power in the federal government at home.

The pre-war isolationists, like their present-day disciples, had a valuable insight into the tension between democracy and an interventionist foreign policy. And though it is certainly true that overall we are far more democratic than we were 40 years ago (consider only the extraordinary extension of civil rights and civil liberties), in some important ways we are less democratic than we would be had we no superpower responsibilities. And yet we have decided, as a democracy, that the trade is worthwhile.

This is not at all to say that we should be cavalier about the trade. Only that we should not deny it. We must do everything we can to minimize the injury that foreign policy does to democracy. If there must be secrecy, it should have the proper congressional oversight. If there must be covert action, it should be carried out by the CIA, not covered up in the NSC. And if there is to be war, even proxy war, Congress must approve.

HOW TO manage the tension between being a superpower and being a democracy? I suggest an axiom, an exception, and a corollary.

The axiom: *No unilateral rule-breaking*. If the rules are no military aid to Nicaragua, no military aid to Nicaragua. If the rules are that we operate under the War Powers Act, then that power must be shared by the president and Congress until the Supreme Court rules otherwise. Lawbreaking by private citizens (civil disobedience) is fine, but only if they are willing to accept the legitimacy of the law in general and show it by going to jail. Lawbreaking by public officials is another thing altogether. There is no such thing as civil disobedience by a president. Presidential lawbreaking is either simple constitutional misconduct or, if the offenses are grave enough, high crimes and misdemeanors.

The exception occurs in *extremis*. The most obvious examples: In early 1861, Lincoln declared a blockade of the Confederate Coast, enlarged the army, and spent \$2 million on

the war effort without congressional approval. (Congress had not yet convened.) He suspended habeas corpus, which you don't ordinarily do even with congressional approval. During the Battle of Britain, FDR made the destroyers-bases deal with Churchill without congressional approval.

But there is a more general example. Theodore Draper ("The Reagan Junta," *New York Review of Books*, January 29) characterizes Reagan's running of foreign policy as government by junta. As a description of America today, it is a gross exaggeration. But government by junta is a fairly good approximation of government by War Cabinet, which is the way Britain was governed during World War II. And under which, as Martin Gilbert has shown, the great decisions were taken by a tiny, civilian-military "Defence Committee" and were never debated in Parliament. They were never even communicated to Parliament, except in very rare secret session and, even then, only in outline. Even the most democratic polities have recognized the possible need to resort to semiauthoritarian government in extremis.

But only in extremis. However important Nicaragua may be, today is neither 1861 nor 1940. Wartime seems to me a fairly good definition of in extremis. Who is to judge? And doesn't allowing such a judgment put us on a slippery slope? The president judges, and of course that puts us on a slippery slope, but in real emergencies you can't help that. There were parchment barriers to FDR's sending destroyers to Churchill in violation of the Neutrality Act, but he did so anyway and it is a good thing he did.

The corollary: *Democracy may be adapted, even constricted, but only by consensual rule-making*. Paul Volcker has more power than any Cabinet officer. Yet elected officials cannot remove him from office for any of his policies. Is that not undemocratic? His answer might be: "It is democratic. Congress can always change the rules that govern my office." This answer highlights two distinct meanings of the word democratic: popular and constitutional. Congress has vested enormous power in the chairman of the Fed and then made him unremovable, except for high crimes and misdemeanors. That certainly is a constriction of democracy defined as popular government. But because Congress established that relationship in the first place and can, in principle, change it, there is no violation of democracy defined as constitutional government.

It seems to me perfectly legitimate to constrict democracy in the populist sense, so long as such a constriction is necessary to meet some overriding national objective (like preserving the integrity of the currency by keeping it at some distance from popular control), and so long as that constriction is effected by democratic, i.e., constitutional, means. We have done so often. Over the last 200 years, we have made dramatic changes in the structure of American democracy, adapting it to our growing power and responsibilities in the world. We have decided to establish a secret service, a military-industrial complex, and a far more powerful executive than the Founders ever wanted.

Let me offer a further example of a "constricting" change. Some covert activities must now be reported to as many as eight congressional committees (intelligence, for-

eign affairs, armed services, and appropriations in both houses) with perhaps 400 staff members. Because these reporting arrangements multiply the possibilities of a leak that might endanger policy and people, both the Carter and Reagan administrations increasingly entrusted secret missions to the NSC, which has no oversight at all and which is not equipped to run these operations in any case.

To make covert operations more secure, and to return them to the CIA where they belong, we might limit the number of members of Congress and staff involved in oversight to a single Joint Intelligence Committee. And to stop leaks, we might levy extremely stiff penalties for those either in Congress or in the administration who are found to have breached confidentiality (for example, denial of security clearance for five years). I think that this would be a useful reform. I do not deny that it constitutes a diminution, albeit minor, of democratic practice (in the populist sense) since the scope of participation in the decision is reduced, as is the possibility of the operation ever being discussed publicly.

BUT THIS IS TINKERING. It will not ultimately be decisive in determining whether we meet our historic responsibilities as a superpower. One must not overestimate the importance of procedural reform in this respect. As I tried to point out earlier ("Divided Superpower," *TNR*, December 22, 1986), the heart of the American problem is not the structure of democracy, but the will of the demos itself. The problem is the frequent reluctance of democratic publics to face, in peacetime, foreign policy and defense needs. Americans remain deeply divided over how much to give up to meet the responsibilities thrust upon them after World War II. As any member of Congress running for re-election knows, and as any secretary of state trying to get a foreign aid bill passed knows, Americans prefer investment in domestic over foreign affairs.

As evidence that this problem is not one of structure, but of national will, consider France, also a democracy. Its public accepts its foreign burdens far more willingly than does the American public. France can dispatch 1,500 troops to Chad with not a tenth the protest aroused by 55 American advisers in El Salvador.

If the will of the demos is the problem, what to do? The only acceptable solution, it seems to me, is to try to change that popular will by persuasion. If President Reagan really wanted to aid the *contras* in 1984, he should have relentlessly taken his case on the stump and on the tube. Instead he chose to husband his popularity, lost the fight in Congress, and then let Ollie do it. If persuasion fails, as often happens, one must respect popular wishes, even if that means failing one's responsibilities as a superpower. This seems to me a fairly plain proposition. (It also seems to me plain that presidents and lieutenant colonels will feel constantly tempted to act otherwise. It is predictable that the North affair is not the last such we have seen.) For one who believes in the rule of law, then, the conflict between democracy and foreign policy may incline one toward melancholy and pessimism.

It does not incline toward authoritarianism.

Some people are troubled when the dilemmas of democratic versus superpower responsibilities are raised. Theodore Draper writes: "The most far-reaching implication of this line of reasoning is that the president and those around him must substitute their will for the 'popular will,' which is the road to Draper's 'government by junta.'"

Must they? Suppose Draper presents an analysis of the relationship between welfare and dependency. Does that logic lead us to the far-reaching implication that government must cease aid to the poor? Draper could, with equal logic, favor restructuring the welfare system. Or he might even have no remedies to offer. He might, in fact, prefer the current system, it being the worst there is except for all the others. The purpose of his analysis might merely be explanatory: to understand why the system is so ineffective, and to counter those who attribute its defects to the venality of individuals or to the inherent laziness of the poorer classes.

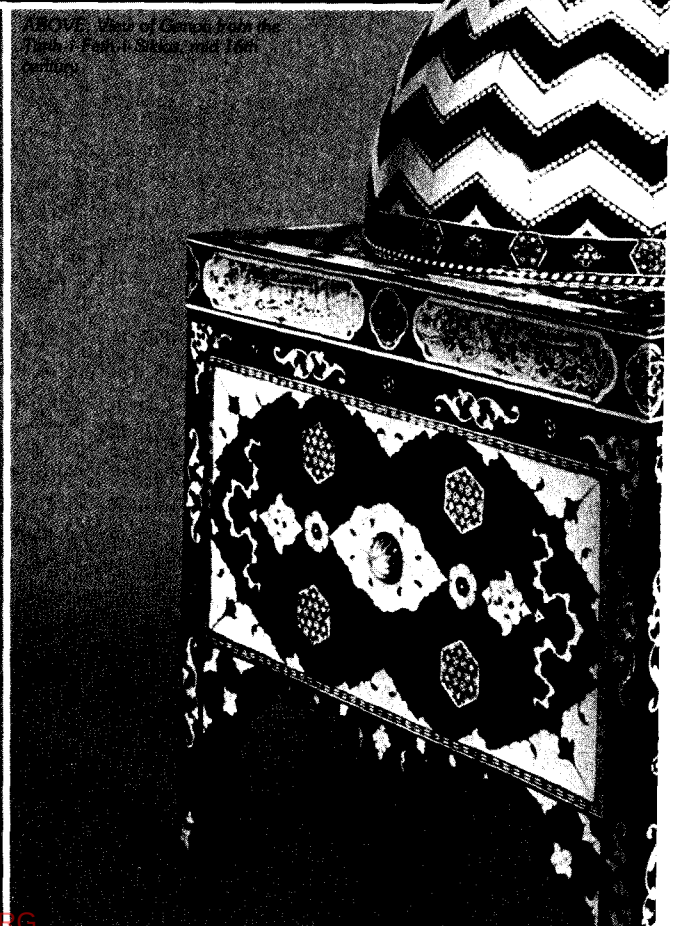
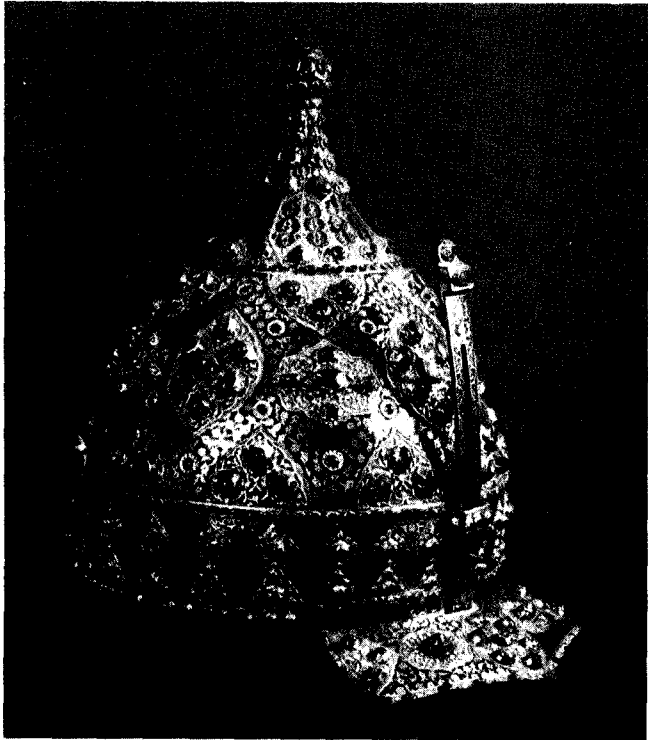
There will always be those who take the logic of the democracy/superpower dilemma to the point of justifying presidential juntas. This is hardly proof, as Draper would have it, that "the Krauthammer dilemma is unreal." One does not reject the fact of a dilemma for fear that others might run the wrong way with it.

My colleague Leon Wieseltier ("Democracy and Colonel North," *TNR*, January 26) rejects the democracy/superpower distinction for another reason: the consequences of facing it squarely are too disturbing; it cannot be because it must not be. He concedes that "there may be a tension between democracy and foreign policy"—which is precisely the point—then adds: "But there cannot be a contradiction. Such a contradiction would signify nothing less than the failure of the American experiment."

But a wish is not an argument. Could this democratic experiment really not fail? The most elementary test of a system is its ability to defend itself. The British experiment came perilously close to failure in 1940. (It was rescued largely by help from outside. For the United States today, there is no outside.) And in that same year, the French experiment in democracy failed utterly, the Third Republic ending in defeat, disarray, and occupation. The root of both the near-failure and the abject failure was precisely the democracies' refusal, in the '30s, to attend to their own defense. It is unpleasant to think that democracy might undermine itself, but that is insufficient reason to dismiss the possibility.

John Adams did not dismiss it. "There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide," he wrote to John Taylor. Pessimism about democracy is hardly an un-American trait. The isolationists were right that interventionism carries within it the possibility of subverting democracy. And their opponents were right when they argued that because of the public's natural preference for tending to domestic rather than foreign needs, a democracy can undermine its own foreign policy. There is indeed a conflict between democracy and foreign policy, a conflict that must be managed with great care. Step one is acknowledging its existence. □

They built



the bridge.

These are some examples of the art of a great empire and a great people that Americans know very little about. They are part of a stunning exhibition entitled "The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent." It will appear at three of the most prestigious museums in the country.

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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Bereft, Bothered, and Bewildered

Anthony Hopkins is an odd and interesting case. Several films and one play (*Equus*) leave no doubt for me about his singular talent. (When last in London, I tried, but couldn't get in, to see him play a Rupert Murdoch character in *Pravda*; he is currently playing King Lear.) Now he is in a new film, *The Good Father*, and is really in it—every blessed scene. With

The Good Father
(Skouras Pictures)

intelligence and force and a particular range of feeling, he commands. But that range has too-perceptible limits; and something else is missing, too.

In his first starring film, *Magic*, he came on as a mad romantic, a contender for the Richard Burton crown. The thought no doubt occurred to producers because Hopkins, too, is Welsh and because the comparison was pressed on them: Burton had replaced Hopkins in the Broadway production of *Equus* as preparation for filming the play. But the contemporary Byron role didn't really suit Hopkins; to a degree, it is continued in his new film, and it still doesn't suit him. First, he doesn't have the voice. It's a good theater voice that can do almost anything he asks of it, but it's not, as it was with Burton, a voice that seems almost to have a life of its own. Hopkins's voice, strong as it is, has no unsuppressible music. Second, his eyes have a faintly leaden look, emphasized by films. An actor can compensate for that handicap—Olivier, who has a touch of absence in his eyes, certainly compensated—but Hopkins doesn't. Third, and most important, there always seem to be two of him present: the exceptional actor fulfilling what's required of him and the private man wondering what a sensible person is doing in this profession. Even that schism is not insuperable: I've often felt it with Alec Guinness, yet Actor Guinness usually manages to persuade Citizen Guinness of his right to work. But with Hopkins I always feel there is a

hidden locked door waiting for a key. He sniffs, usually to lend a veristic touch or to cover a transition; he stares into space to make sure we know that both the character and the actor have minds; and he proceeds to give a performance so constrictedly good that we despair of his ever being better. If you saw Burton in the film of *Equus*, particularly if you had seen Hopkins in it on stage, the difference is explicit. Burton reached deeper, and that reach was connected to his complete delight in acting.

But Hopkins is always well worth seeing, and in *The Good Father* he has a fat role. He plays Bill Hooper, a marketing expert for a London publishing house, in his early 40s, unhappily separated from his wife and, much of the time, from his six-year-old son. The tensions are uniquely colored because Bill was an ardent supporter of feminism in his early married days, and now he is somewhat hoist by the feminist petard. To make it worse, he apparently still has feminist sympathies—more than his wife and her contemporaries now have, many more than the one younger woman we meet. The only fervent feminist woman in the film is a barrister, and she contrasts strongly with the younger woman, an artist who wants merely to love and be loved. Bill feels a bit like a progressive confounded by progress—or at least by change. It is salt in the wound of his separation.

The screenplay is from a novel by Peter Prince, adapted by the playwright and translator Christopher Hampton, and except for the vacuous dialogue given the young woman, it is succinctly written. (Bill tells a man that he forsook editorial work for marketing. Other Man: "I don't believe I've read anything you've marketed.") The central action comes from Bill's new friendship with another estranged husband and father, Roger (played by Jim Broadbent). When Roger's wife plans to move back to her native Australia with their boy, Bill incites Roger to take legal steps, thus uncorking a lot of his own bottled feelings.

The real locus of the story is the helplessness of the man in a situation like Bill's, a theme familiar from *Kramer Vs. Kramer* but here treated much more rigorously and darkened by Bill's extra sense of betrayal. He feels betrayed not only because his wife has left him for another man but because (whether or not this is rational) a woman has deserted him after his support of women's rights. And all of that is further complicated because he has some guilt about his son. When the young artist, who has become his lover, says that she would like to have a baby, Bill declines firmly. A child, he says, drains "all the love that's going." We can do our own surmising as to how his love for his son, which is clear, has thus affected his love for his wife; and we can surmise further about a man to whom such a problem presents itself. Still, it's true for Bill, and is harrowing: throughout the film there's a series of "flashbacks"—in quotation marks because we never really know whether it's fact or fantasy—in which Bill tried to smother his son when a baby. Equally ambiguous is the ending. Bill's wife has split with her lover; reunion is discussed but not settled. We last see Bill sitting in the back yard of his new flat. Waiting, we assume,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Crimes of the Heart. Beth Henley's play/screenplay, a seeming comedy about three strange Mississippi sisters, is inadequately directed; but, aided by Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek, much of the script's quality comes through. (Reviewed 2/2/87)

Little Shop of Horrors. A mild musical about a strange flower shop, greatly enlivened by witty direction and editing. (1/26/87)

Platoon. Vietnam combat, pungently recreated by the writer-director Oliver Stone, who was there. The film's general excellence makes the war especially ironic in view of what has happened since. (1/19/87)

Thérèse. A subtle, lovely biography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, complete in its austerity though minimal in method. Alain Cavalier has made a work of art. (12/29/86)

SK

to see what his wife and he will do.

In short, Bill is a man racked with conflicting truths and self-knowledges, so much so that he can't even be the hero of his own drama: the issues are not straight enough for heroism. If the film is not especially moving, that's because the filmmakers are more interested in honesty than in having us root for Bill. But through the best kind of recognitions, *The Good Father* is always engaging.

The film's male focus gives the women in the cast lesser opportunities. The wives of Bill and Roger are well enough played by Harriet Walter and Cheryl Viner but are not striking. The women who stand out are the sturdy feminist barrister, Miriam Margolyes, and the young artist, played by the tender and beautiful Joanne Whalley. Jim Broadbent, as Roger, is more appealing than Hopkins, largely because his character, a

bumbling, very decent schoolteacher, is much less complex, an affectionate Saint Bernard of a man; still Broadbent could have overdone it and doesn't. Simon Callow, best known here as the vicar in *A Room with a View*, has slimmed down and sharpened up for the conceited young barrister who wins Roger's case. Callow catches perfectly the snobbish egocentric energy of the upper-class professional who knows that he only has to keep on to end up very rich and very eminent. The role is something more than the familiar smooth English barrister: it is close to an indictment of the class stratification that makes certain kinds of success relatively easy.

Mike Newell, who directed *Dance with a Stranger* with much artifice, has tackled this film with more zest and immediacy. His eye is sure, as is his sense of punctuation. His abrupt cuts come just when

they help, and he uses dissolves exactly when we (as we learn) want them. He orchestrates crosscurrents nicely: for instance, a background fight between a punk youth and his barrister behind Bill's conversation with a barrister up close. Newell is cunning with a sequence in which Bill flees after certain events and Roger chases him. It seems ridiculous as drama, these two men suddenly running through the streets, and Newell handles it so that they eventually become aware that it's ridiculous; thus he encloses a movie cliché in their consciousness and redeems it. And Newell nicely combines the tawdriness and charm of London. Cars and trains rush by the windows of cozy flats; garbage—because of a strike—is piled high in quaint streets. The combination underscores the film's texture: an old subject with latter-day complications.

Move over Rome, Florence, Venice. Emilia is here.

FAITH IN THE FLESH

BY DAVID ROSAND

"ART HISTORY and the 'Blockbuster' Exhibition" was the title of an editorial in the September 1986 issue of the *Art Bulletin*, a quarterly published by the College Art Association of America. Editorials are rare in this prestigious scholarly journal. This one expressed with some urgency the concern of the professional community of art historians over the phenomenon of monumental loan exhibitions. These vast spectacles have captured the imagination of the masses and provided new financial resources for the sponsoring museums—but often at the expense of other institutional and curatorial needs.

The King Tut exhibit first demonstrated the full potential of these exhibitions to attract crowds, publicity, and, particularly through commercial exploitation (occasionally in the poorest taste), money. The most "successful" of these enterprises, as the editorial pointed out,

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was the National Gallery's "The Treasure Houses of Britain." Any loan exhibition involves subjecting works of art to the vicissitudes of travel and handling, and the reasons for risking precious objects must be measured against the ultimate goals and values of the show itself. But "The Treasure Houses of Britain,"

"The Age of Correggio and the Carracci:
Emilian Painting of the 16th and 17th
Centuries"

The National Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C.:
December 19-February 16

The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York City: March 26-May 24

triumphant in the number and variety of its loans, in the magnificence of its installation, in the lavishness of its catalog, and in the extraordinary interest it aroused in the media and the public—"which seemed to focus as much, if not more, on the social activities as on the works of art"—failed to satisfy the criteria for taking such risks. "Undeniably," the editorial concluded, "some rarely exhibited, important works were made

available for aesthetic pleasure and scholarly study alike. But, it must be asked, at what expense, literally and figuratively, and with what permanent contribution to knowledge?"

With its current exhibition, the National Gallery more than redeems itself. "The Age of Correggio and the Carracci: Emilian Painting of the 16th and 17th Centuries" does indeed have a high critical purpose. Organized by three museums—the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna joined with the National Gallery—and stopping at three venues, this is precisely the kind of high-risk enterprise that can justify itself as a genuine contribution to knowledge. Assembling nearly 200 paintings, it demonstrates the vitality and validity of a great tradition of Italian painting and adds a new and profound dimension to our understanding of the history of art. To the Tuscan and Venetian schools, which have remained the standard references for everyman's notion of the history of Italian painting, there must now be added the Emilian.

In fact, this is a complex pictorial tra-

dition, centered at different times in different cities in northern Italy—but especially in Parma and, later, in Bologna. The names that dominate and propel this tradition are hardly unknown to us. Correggio, Parmigianino, and the Carracci all enjoy relatively secure places in the textbooks of art history. Domenichino, Guido Reni, Lanfranco, and Guercino are familiar to us as major protagonists of baroque painting in Italy. But these painters are all too normally measured against standards established according to other rules and other values. Correggio faces inevitable comparison with Raphael and Titian, and Parmigianino's fame—at least for the Tuscan Giorgio Vasari, that most influential of art historians—must rest on his having revived the spirit of Raphael. It is as though outside of three great metropolitan centers—Florence, Rome, and Venice—all the rest of Italy remained provincial.

THAT PECULIAR cultural vision, however, is part of the historiographic legacy of the Renaissance itself. In the historical scheme of Vasari's *Lives*, for example, Leonardo da Vinci is responsible for the invention of the modern style, the style of the third age of the Renaissance—what we now call the High Renaissance. Immediately after Vasari's biography of Leonardo comes his life of Giorgione, who, inspired by the example of Leonardo, introduced the modern style in Venice. And, following Giorgione, it is Correggio who was the first to introduce the modern style into Lombardy, the generic label used for most of northern Italy. Still, Vasari observes, Correggio could only accomplish so much, working in the provinces; had he only been able to visit Rome, to study its monuments, what a truly magnificent artist he might have become. Vasari's assumption that Correggio did not see Rome is probably wrong, but his condescension has tended to color subsequent historiographic perception.

Baldesar Castiglione, hailing from the northern Italian town of Mantua, felt so compelled to defend the Lombard vocabulary and locution in which he wrote his *Book of the Courtier* (1528) against the expected criticism that he ignored the great Tuscan literary models of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. The linguistic hegemony of Florence, he wrote, was to be resisted:

We should not wholly despise the idiom of the other noble cities of Italy where men gather who are wise, talented, and elo-

quent, and who discourse on great matters. . . . I deem that among the words which are current in the speech of these places, I have been justified in using those which have grace in themselves, and elegance when pronounced, and which are commonly held to be good and expressive, even though they may not be Tuscan . . .

And *la questione della lingua*, the question of language, was debated in the painters' studios as well. Castiglione's words might well be invoked to defend the independent value of the art of his northern Italian contemporary Correggio—which has such grace in itself, and elegance.

A GREAT virtue of this exhibition is that, by bringing together two centuries of Emilian painting, it confirms the integrity and consistency of a pictorial tradition. At the core of that tradition is a certain equanimity, a keeping of antinomies in balance—line and color, light and shadow, surface and depth, fiction and reality. Nor is this the same as the vaunted balance of High Renaissance classicism in Rome, for (with the possible exception of the mannerist moment initiated by Parmigianino) art itself, art as artifice and as model, hardly participates in this Emilian pictorial economy. Rather, it is subsumed into the natural fabric of painting. No dialogue with classical antiquity, however inevitable its presence in Italian art, interrupts this local strain. Even Annibale Carracci's famous dialogues with Raphael and Michelangelo (in the vault decorations of the Farnese Gallery), surely among the most resonant in the history of painting, seem like the most natural conversation. There is nothing forced, only a most respectful challenge all around.

Still, the exhibition at the National Gallery reminds us constantly that "Emilian" encompasses a variety of local dialects and personalities, that one of its real strengths as an art-historical notion—not to say as a historical entity—is its ability to keep that variety itself in balance. Walking through the two main sections of the show, devoted respectively to the 16th and the 17th centuries, one finds threads of continuity. They range from overt figural recapitulations and variations to more subtle continuities of color. Mauve, for example, has never been so dynamically inflected and combined—from the smoky blues of Correggio to the delicate lavenders of Guido Reni and the robust madder of Guercino.

The style that transformed Italian painting in the opening decades of the 16th century aimed at a unity of pictorial structure on several levels. In formal composition, it sought a more monumental integration of the discrete parts of a picture, and that integration in turn was confirmed by a new sense of tonal unity. His Tuscan bias notwithstanding, Vasari was right to recognize Leonardo as the leading figure in this movement. Indeed, even though he hardly figures in the current exhibition, it might be argued that the spirit of the great Florentine stands ultimately behind the entire tradition traced in "The Age of Correggio and the Carracci." Leonardo spent two long and active periods of his career in Milan. The example of his painting—of its large-scale organization and tonal harmonies—effectively created the 16th-century Lombard school. Whatever Correggio may have known directly of Leonardo's work, his own aims in painting were closely related. Above all, they involved a certain *sfumato* effect, a smoking of forms and colors.

At the threshold of to the installation at the National Gallery, two of Correggio's most beautiful pictures stop the visitor immediately: *The Lamentation* and *The Martyrdom of Four Saints*. Originally decorating the side walls of a private chapel in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma, the canvases are hung in intelligent recognition of their intended relationship. At the very beginning, then, we encounter the special affect of Correggio's art, its peculiarly gentle pathos. This is a function of his invented characters, of their less than heroic proportions, and of the graceful choreography by which a pirouetting executioner becomes an almost sympathetic protagonist in a grim dance. In *The Lamentation*, Correggio creates masks of tragic physiognomy that derive their conviction in large measure from the normative figural types of their wearers. The conviction of their exaggerated affect depends as well upon that tonal modeling that softens the harshness of their features; the new style extends the life of a late Gothic expressive mode by rendering it all the more natural.

BETWEEN surface and line Correggio exploits an implicit tension. Casting a veil of shadow across form, he immerses it in a spatial continuum of atmosphere. Seen through that scrim, colors of insistent hue modify their claims and yield some of their individual power to the larger order—without, however, sur-

rendering their individuality. Tonal atmosphere, then, seems less the shaded darkness of Leonardo than an extended chromatic glow. Nor is the fundamental clarity of contour sacrificed. It, too, agrees to submit to the fluid order of tone, softening without losing its edge. Correggio inflects outline into space by, in effect, drawing in light, attenuating an illumined surface until it becomes its own contour. Modeling in this way implies sources of illumination from behind, as well as from before, the figure; the result is shadowed form bathed in light. This is painting of a most sensuous kind. Neither the material sensuality of Titian, in which paint becomes correlative to flesh, nor the refined linear sinuosity of Parmigianino's mannered Raphaelism, Correggio's sensuality is an almost casual natural caressing of surface.

It is the kind of sensuality that drove John Ruskin to distraction, an "inherent sensuality, wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects." The coyness of the provocatively foreshortened angels that populate Correggio's frescoed domes is more honestly realized in the body of the beautiful Ganymede amorously borne aloft by eagle Jupiter (in a painting in Vienna not in the exhibition). Ruskin recognized the moral momentum here, the danger from which only sanctioning patronage presumably saved the artist: "Correggio, in the sidelong grace, artificial smiles, and purple languors of his saints, indicates the inferior instinct which would have guided his choice in quite other directions, had it not been for the fashion of the age, and the need of the day." More modern scholarship suggests that the painter fully satisfied both.

Correggio's languid tonalism enabled Parmigianino to give special life to his more self-consciously sensual figural grace. Although it hardly does justice to the stature of Parmigianino's art simply to acknowledge its blending of Correggio and Raphael, some such combination of the apparently natural and the studi-

ously artificial accounts for its particular effect. Seven paintings by (or attributed to) Parmigianino offer as full a representation of this seductive master as we are likely to have in this country. The selection includes some of his most famous pictures—e.g., the *Portrait of a Young Woman (Antea)* from Naples and *The Conversion of Saint Paul* from Vienna. One of the most intriguing is *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist* from the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. Painted in tempera on canvas, probably to save time and money, it is executed rapidly, with broad and decisive brush

of this Ferrarese court artist who was so often forced to compete with distinguished outsiders, above all with Raphael and Titian. The less well-known Lelio Orsi emerges as a master of nocturnal pictorialism; his four small canvases explore the possibilities of light-splintered darkness that remind one of Jacopo Bassano and even of El Greco. And viewing Pietro Faccini's *The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence*, coloristically rich and lushly stroked, we understand Annibale Carracci's comment: "To paint in that manner he must have used real flesh."

Bridging the two sections of the exhibition, exactly as they bridged the two centuries of Italian painting, is the portion of the show devoted to the Carracci, the brothers Agostino and Annibale and their cousin Ludovico. If Correggio was the driving inspiration (albeit only indirectly at times) for so much of Emilian painting of the 16th century, it was the Carracci who effectively canonized him. They would serve, in turn, to propel that pictorial tradition for the next century. Their historical position, which has been the object of much recent scholarship, structures our understanding of the history of Italian painting at the turn of the 17th century. Indeed, from that moment on their achievement has been recognized as a renaissance, a revitalization of Italian painting. The Carracci rescued it from the artifice and the



ANNIBALE CARRACCI, *PIETÀ* (MUSEO DI CAPODIMONTE, NAPLES)

strokes. Not really bravura painting, not a conceited display, this is a confident demonstration of a master brush at work. And much of our pleasure in its contemplation lies in following the sweep of that brush, its energy and broad economy, its intelligent articulation and accentuation of form. It is like being very close to a fine fresco surface.

If Correggio and Parmigianino dominate the first rooms of the 16th-century section, their subsequent situation within the larger context of lesser painters affords a proper measure of their genius. Dosso Dossi, for example, is represented by a range of works—allegorical, narrative, religious—that permits evaluation

formulas of mannerism, by a double appeal to nature and to the masters of the past—to Raphael, especially, but also to Correggio and the great Venetians.

With four paintings by Agostino, 17 by Annibale, and 15 by Ludovico, "The Age of Correggio and the Carracci" contains at its core a small but significant exhibition devoted to the Carracci themselves. This little show alone would have warranted the entire enterprise. As full a range of their art is represented here as is possible, outside the Farnese Gallery: altarpieces and frescoes, portraits and landscapes, genre and mythology, intimate and heroic, comic and tragic modes. Nor is this a simple survey, a summary

of the known. New discoveries and new problems confront the art historian here—like the two versions of Annibale's *Boy Drinking*, and *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* attributed to the young Ludovico.

UNITED BY family ties, and by the academy that they collectively founded and ran in Bologna, the Carracci nonetheless appear as three distinct personalities. Annibale has generally been the best known to us. Having transferred to Rome, the international center of the European art world, and painted the great decorations in the Farnese palace, he established a reputation with a resonance unavailable in Bologna. Ludovico, on the other hand, remained at home. His influence was great: Bologna sent out more than its share of painters who would make the Emilian tradition a central part of the Italian baroque achievement. But Ludovico never enjoyed the public acclaim accorded to his younger cousin. Instead of refining the natural basis for the new classicism, Ludovico increasingly explored a more personal stylistic realm, one that in the intense physicality and sharp chiaroscuro of its drama seems at times closer to the aesthetic we associate with Caravaggio. At the National Gallery we have every opportunity to get to know this remarkable and complex artist.

Still, it is Annibale Carracci who especially impresses us with the expressive power of his classicism, with a canny combination of the ideal and the real, of subtle drawing and sensuous coloring—a validation of the traditional studio formula that counseled forging a style of central Italian *disegno* and Venetian *colorito*. Like a Raphael reborn, Annibale demonstrates that an art of strict formal control, an art dedicated to a measured norm, to the practice of the rules of a (now suspect) pictorial rhetoric, can distill the deepest passion in images of profound affect. *The Dead Christ Mourned*, from the National Gallery in London, succeeds in moving us precisely because its pathos is subjected to such rigorous control; and the *Pietà* from Naples, one of the most eloquent paintings in any tradition, adds new dimensions of feeling to its inspiring model, Michelangelo's marble group in St. Peter's. To read and to respond to the feeling of such a classical art may require special effort on the part of a modern viewer—Frank Stella has recently insisted on “how difficult it is to look at Annibale's paint-

ings”—but the rewards of such effort are great. From Annibale, as from Raphael or from Poussin, we learn not only about the powers of art, but about human feeling as well.

“Quiet painting,” as Stella writes of Annibale, “even of great originality, is sure to be merely the subject of intermittent academic revivalism.” Yet the lessons of this art for any painter seeking to work with the human body as a truly expressive instrument are of the most profound kind. More than Caravaggio, for all the rumble of his chiaroscuro and the apparently natural declamation of his creatures, Annibale teaches the fundamental lessons of speaking with and through the figure—what the Renaissance tradition knew as *l'eloquenza corporale*, the eloquence of the body. This exhibition should find the most interested members of its audience among today's painters.

INDEED, it was in part the pedagogic success of the Carracci and their academy that secured their pivotal place in the history of Italian painting. Unfortunately, perhaps; for that perception of their historical importance may have thwarted a more direct vision of their actual artistic achievements. “To write the history of the Carracci and their followers is virtually to write the history of painting in all Italy for two centuries, down to the present day,” wrote Luigi Lanzi in his *History of Painting in Italy* at the end of the 18th century. The final portion of the exhibition covers Bolognese painting in the 17th century, that is, the legacy of the Carracci. Bologna did indeed play a most significant role in supplying the Roman capital with painters. Domenichino, Reni, and Guercino are particularly well represented here; there is rich confirmation of their status as painters, of their command of various genres and modes of painting. Although Domenichino's grand *The Last Communion of Saint Jerome*—his first major altarpiece and an explicit challenge and homage to the rendering of the same subject by his master, Agostino Carracci—is to be seen only in the New York installation of the exhibition, the National Gallery has been able to add several of its own new acquisitions to the show. Above all, we are treated to a pair of relatively late paintings by Guercino, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* and *Amnon and Tamar*, two instances of Old Testament erotica that gain in sensual appeal from the compositional restraint of their

narrative format.

While the primary thrust of this final part of the exhibition is to document the major historical impulse of Bolognese painting in the 17th century as represented by these leading painters, the more satisfying pleasures viewing these rooms may lie in the discovery of lesser-known masters. Some of them fit uneasily into the larger historical pattern, insisting rather on their own individuality and place in the scheme of things: the bravura brushwork of Mastelletta (Giovanni Andrea Donducci, 1575-1655), for example, revives the luminescent landscape mode of Nicolò dell'Abate in the mid-16th century. Guido Cagnacci (1601-63), in a series of paintings hung around *The Death of Cleopatra* from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, establishes himself as an unrivaled painter of the female breast. And climaxing the final room of the exhibition is a wonderful altarpiece by Giovanni Antonio Burini (1656-1727), *The Virgin Immaculate with Saints Petronius and Dionysius the Areopagite*, which seems to recapitulate all the lessons of its predecessors, combining the affect and palette of the later Guido Reni with a vibrant brushwork learned from close attention to the great Venetians, especially Veronese. With this canvas we accompany Bolognese painting toward the threshold of the 18th century.

OF ALL the lesser-known masters in the show, however, the one who makes the strongest impact, who will be a major discovery especially for painters, is Bartolomeo Schedoni (1578-1615). In works like his *Entombment*, master craftsmanship, in the fullest studio sense, transcends itself and rises to the level of pictorial genius. A tectonic compositional structure of clearly drawn forms, figures and draperies, provides the firm base for a brilliant choice of palette. Contained within these delineated shapes, a remarkable sequence of colors spreads across the canvas: mauve, burnished yellow, three shades of white, deep green, a deep-toned blue, terra rosa, warm crimson, magenta, a metallic blue-gray edged in gold—all carried by the inflected chromatic neutrality of flesh, living and dead. This range of hues is played with convincing precision against a ground of deep shadow and lowering cloud. That shadow moves through the airless space, muting the sharpness of edges and the purity of hues and establishing the tonal harmony

that gathers the separate notes into a compelling unity. All is artifice; all is real. This is painting that seems overtly to display its mechanics, to reveal the secrets of its art—and yet it is deeply moving, an Emilian rival to Caravaggio's more famous *Entombment*.

"The Age of Correggio and the Carracci" lives up to its billing as "the most comprehensive survey of its kind ever mounted." The catalog for the show, now the major publication on two centuries of Emilian painting, includes impressive essays by eminent art historians from Italy, the United States, and France. That such an intelligently conceived and aesthetically rewarding exhibition could be realized on this scale is owed to the commitment (and courage) of the leading scholars at the three participating museums: Andrea

Emiliani, director of the Pinacoteca Nazionale; Sydney Freedberg, chief curator of the National Gallery; and John Pope-Hennessy, former consultative chairman of the department of European painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This is (happily) not a "blockbuster" of the kind that will compete only for press coverage and social excitement. It is, instead, the kind of serious art-historical enterprise that genuinely fulfills, on a very high level, the educational responsibility of the museum as a public institution, offering new material and unfamiliar pleasure to an audience anxious to expand its experience and knowledge of great art. One official of the National Gallery confidently predicted that people would stay away from this show in droves. That would be a pity—and their loss.

late in the swollen cities, where they shaded away from subsistence labor to crime. The comforting myth of freeborn England was not entirely false; not, that is, when compared with the absolute monarchies of the Continent. Still, this society was held in place not by despotic regulation but by a ferocious penal code. The punishment for felony was death, and felony comprised almost every theft down to the smallest. In practice, the penalty was more often waived than not. But since a prison system in the modern sense scarcely existed, and the tide of crime rose inexorably (or so it seemed to the propertied and legislating classes), an alternative to execution had to be found.

Found it was, by chance: more specifically, by Captain Cook in 1770. He named it New South Wales. His landfall was at Botany Bay on the southeastern coast of Australia, several hundred miles north of Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania, the pendant island off the southern tip of Australia. (Tasmania, oddly enough, was discovered by European explorers much earlier than the continent itself.) Until the late 1700s nobody could go to Australia, at least on a regular basis. Two essential discoveries made the journey possible: accurate chronometers for navigation, and antiscorbutics. The latter guaranteed that the larger part of any crew that attempted the voyage did not die of scurvy during the many months at sea. Moreover, until the last half of the 19th century, nobody *would* go to Australia, at least if they could help it. The trans-Atlantic journey for American immigrants was severe enough, until iron and steam. Even with lime juice and pickled cabbage, it was ghastly. When the Second Fleet sailed to New South Wales, there were 499 passengers on one ship, the *Neptune*; and 158 died on the voyage. For a very long time, therefore, Australia remained, in Hughes's words, "too distant, weird and tainted to attract many free immigrants."

The early years of this convict colony were a nightmare (or a "dystopia," as Hughes calls it). The settler economy remained for some time very primitive. Its convicts were ruled brutally by the New South Wales Corps, a.k.a. the Rum Corps, which was little better than those whom it terrorized. The British authorities worried from time to time that this sunny and faraway land might seem almost a lucky break for those transported there. Australia, it was urged, must be "rendered an Object of real Terror." It was an unnecessary worry. The convicts

DOWN, DOWN UNDER

The Fatal Shore by Robert Hughes

(Knopf, 640 pp., \$24.95)

For 500 years now, perhaps the greatest adventure of history has been the impact of Europe upon the rest of the world. Among the many cultures in the many continents, Europe was unique as agent, as active force, as aggressor. Her sea-borne empires conquered most of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Many remote corners of the world were settled by Europeans, from the Argentine to Siberia to New Zealand. The most formidable creation was North America. Four centuries of settlement, conquest, and extermination have produced in the two countries north of the Rio Grande a population of 260 million, overwhelmingly the descendants of free European immigrants, who outnumber all the inhabitants of the four most populous Western European nations combined.

If North America was the greatest example of Europe's imposing herself on other ends of the earth, however, it was not the strangest. That title must go to the settlement of Australia. Two hundred years ago that vast island-continent was almost unknown to Europe. Then it was drawn into the European empire by Great Britain. Its first European inhabit-

ants arrived in January 1788. By 1851 the population had risen to something near 450,000. But most of their forebears had not come there as free men. For 80 years from the sailing of the First Fleet, the British government used Australia as a huge prison: 160,000 men and women were transported there as convicts. This epic story of the making of Australia by convict transportation in those first 80 years is the subject of Robert Hughes's epic book, a noble, terrible, bittersweet account by an Australian of his country's origins, about which his countrymen to this day have inextricably mixed and complicated feelings.

As with many fateful episodes of history, this great experiment was the result of a coincidence. On one side of the globe was Georgian England. Its glittering achievements in art and letters, country-house life and Palladian city squares, constitutional government and freedom of expression were all based on an elaborate social hierarchy. At its base was the "swinish multitude," to use Burke's phrase. A mass of working classes (rather than a single working class) was driven off the land to pull-

were a rough lot, as Hughes goes to great pains to make clear. Their fate was even rougher.

PITY RUNS throughout Hughes's book, but not sentimentality. In particular, he ably steers a path between the two besetting mistakes his countrymen have made at different times about the first Australians: the mistake of despising them and the mistake of glamorizing them. Few Australians now blush at "the Stain" of their shameful past. Many accept uncritically a different myth: that the convicts were victims and martyrs, radical agitators who could be considered political prisoners. This latter myth was given currency decades ago by those archsentimentalists, the English Labour historians J. L. and Barbara Hammond: "The village Hampdens of that generation sleep by the shore of Botany Bay."

In fact, the great majority of convicts were the sad dregs of society, petty criminals quite without political consciousness. There was no more than a handful of early union organizers who could be reckoned as political prisoners—along with the Irish, of course, from the 1798 rebels to the later Fenians. (Hughes is a little wobbly on Irish history, by the way; the "puppet" Irish parliament scarcely lasted for 700 years, and Irish Catholics were called "croppies" not because they were sharecroppers but because their hair was worn short, as much a mark of rebellion in the time of the French Revolution as wearing hair long was in the 1960s.)

If the convicts should not be sentimentalized, however, they should surely be pitied. They were kept in filthy conditions, with barely enough to eat, working on chain gangs, living always under the threat of the cat-o'-nine-tails. Early Australia was ruled by the cat, as were the British army and navy at the time. Parts of this book, therefore, are not for the squeamish. A few dozen strokes of the cat turned a man's back into red, raw pulp. A longer flogging could easily be fatal. And floggings were awarded for every conceivable offense, including "smiling while on the Chain," to which one might have thought there was small temptation.

As the first decades of the 19th century came and went, New South Wales acquired a gentler aspect. It attracted free settlers. Between these settlers and the Emancipists—convicts freed from their sentences—an acute tension developed. Transportation was far from ended. In-

deed, it reached its peak during the years 1831-35, when Australia received 26,731 involuntary immigrants. But all the while a more vigorous economy was developing, whose backbone was to be the crossbred merino sheep. The colonies were granted legislative councils; and in 1833, to the rage of the "Exclusivists," Emancipists were allowed to serve on juries.

Yet behind these brighter prospects the drama of penal Australia was still more frightfully unfolding. The authorities created remote punishment stations for hardened offenders. Their direction fell into the hands, maybe inevitably, of deranged sadists. At this point, at its very worst, the system can be compared, without exaggeration or indecency, with those other special societies created in our century under the rules of Stalin and Hitler. It is in bringing to life—or rather, to living death—these circles of hell that Hughes surpasses himself, both in his command of primary sources and in his literary skill. Thanks to him, for Australians and for others, the names of Macquarie Harbor in Van Diemen's Land and of Norfolk Island a thousand miles east of Sidney should now have the ring of nothing less than Belsen or Vorkuta.

Men killed themselves to escape from such places; or they killed others. At Macquarie, prisoners would murder just to be taken to Hobart to be tried and hanged. On Norfolk Island, under the loathsome James Thomas Morisset, there was suicide by lottery: one man of a group would draw to be victim, another to kill him. Then the killer would be taken for trial and execution, with the others as witnesses, to Sidney, where there was an outside chance of escape.

ALL OF which tells only the story of the immigrants, free or unfree. Australia's cradle years saw another story, more terrible still. When the white man arrived, after all, the continent was not uninhabited. There were perhaps 300,000 aborigines. They were primitive, quite cut off from the rest of the world, asking only to be left alone. But they were not left alone. The white Australians hated, harassed, and hunted them. They exterminated some of them physically, and entirely destroyed their culture and way of life.

On the smaller scale of Van Diemen's Land, the job of extermination was pushed through to the end. (British settlers accomplished this same task on another island, Newfoundland.) Shot, poi-

soned, infected with disease, removed to die on offshore islands, the blacks were cut down. Well before the end of the last century, the very last aboriginal inhabitant of Tasmania had disappeared. The treatment of the original Australians, like the treatment of the Indians of the Americas, calls into question our very notions of "civilization" and "barbarism." Unsensational as ever, Hughes does not shirk the fact that the convicts, whether on assignment or Emancipist, were in fact the aborigines' worst foes.

Transportation to New South Wales ended in 1840, by which time only 12 percent of the thriving colony's inhabitants were convicts. The end of the system was regretted both in England, where there was still concern about the crime rate and a wish to purge the country of its criminals, and in Australia, particularly among the emerging class of large graziers for whom the assignment system was an admirable source of cheap labor. Other colonials longed and begged for the Stain to be expunged so that their stigma might one day be forgotten. In the end, the system died a lingering death. The last batch of convicts, the Irish "politicals," was shipped in 1868 to the Swan River in Western Australia, where their descendants are even now watching the America's Cup with the well-known local lager in hand.

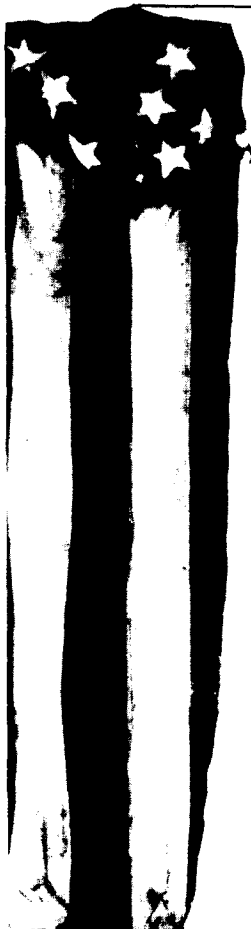
ON THE far side of the country Australia had emerged, by that time, from its chrysalis. The gold rush of 1851 played an important part, though socially more than economically. Though quite large, the gold fields were insignificant compared with those to be discovered in the Witwatersrand a generation later, which have entirely conditioned South African history since. What the Australian fields enabled was the creation of a class at once wholly plebeian and very rich. Two hundred years after the First Fleet sailed, one might argue that it is the Bendigo digger, rather than the Botany Bay convict, who set the tone for modern Australia.

Today Australia is at a fascinating stage of its development, poised perhaps to develop radically as a culture and as a society. Hughes laments the old servile attitude of Australia to the England that had begotten (or misbegotten) it. He lays this on too thick. Of course generations of Australian children studied English history and literature as their own. What else should they have done? Consider, for example, that the United States, al-

though politically independent for more than 100 years, was financially, and to a large extent culturally, a dependency of England until this century. The Australian cringe is no longer the problem. "Australianness" now is tense and confused, stretched between two extremes: excessive proletarian vulgarity and the excessive pretentiousness of a colonial intelligentsia, aggression and diffidence, Ockerism and esotericism, the conscious self-parody of Barry Humphreys and the unconscious self-parody of Patrick White. But there is a synthesis, a middle way, and it is one of Hughes's achievements to have found it.

HUGHES'S book is a rare thing, a work of deep, exhaustive original scholarship that is also continually exciting to read. He does not fear the purple passage. He keeps the narrative alive with any number of portraits of men and women who would be scarcely believable but for the documentary evidence. Hughes writes with a gritty, virile prose and the sharp visual sense of the art critic that he is by trade. Finally, he excels at what used to be a standard feature of historical writing, the Carlylian descriptive set piece. Sometimes, however, he slips gear. There is a fine reconstruction, for example, of a hanging, slightly spoiled at the end when we read of a chaplain's "cassock flying": an English clergyman would have been wearing a cassock at that date about as surely as he would have been wearing a sweatshirt and jeans. And Hughes's nomenclature is all over the place. This is not pomposity but a simple question of usage. Lord John Russell can no more be called "Lord Russell" (or Lord Grey "Lord Charles Grey"), or the Rev. Thomas Rogers "the Rev. Rogers," than New South Wales can be called New Wales.

Nor are Hughes's own views on crime and punishment a useful addition to the book. He sympathizes with those liberal administrators who saw their task as reforming the prisoners in their charge. That is perfectly understandable. Such men were good-hearted and kindly, in contrast with the monsters of cruelty. But when Hughes asserts that the only plausible reason for punishment is deterrence or rehabilitation, he does not consider that another ethically valid cause, perhaps the only one, may be retribution, or at least the affirmation of the legal order. Quite simply, it may be necessary to punish lawbreakers in order to reward law abiders. And there is also the



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possibility that "rehabilitation" may be a profoundly immoral interference with a person's autonomy.

Still, there is little enough moralizing in *The Fatal Shore*. As in all the best books, the moral is left for the reader to draw. Here, more than usually with works of history, it should be drawn with caution. This is a tale of appalling suffering, and of heroic endurance. There are victors and there are vanquished. To the latter, to those flogged to death or hanged on Norfolk Island, to the Tasmanian aborigine, history can say alas but cannot help or pardon.

The ultimate victors, of course, are the Australians of today. Hughes's attitude toward his contemporary countrymen seems ambiguous. As he remarks at one point, most of the 15 million or more Australians are descended demographically from English, Scottish, and Irish free settlers who arrived after 1870, and from Central and Southern European settlers who arrived after 1945. But then demography isn't everything, and neither are ethnic origins; or else Gore Vidal would be right and Thanksgiving and 1776 would mean nothing to Jewish, or Irish, or Italian Americans.

Generalizations about national legacies and national character should be used sparingly. Still, to a casual ob-

server, there really are legacies, both benevolent and harmful, from the chain gangs on Botany Bay: the tradition of Australian "mateship," and Australian bloody-mindedness. Hughes regrets the political apathy of those of his generation who put up with stifling conformity so that they can go surfing at lunchtime. (Anyone of British descent may be forgiven, however, if they make certain compromises to escape the British winter.) And there is another unhappy inheritance from the mother country: one of the world's two strongest, most aggressive, and most economically debilitating trade union movements. Still, as Australia approaches its bicentenary, it may just be developing a unique culture, egalitarian and creative at the same time. In any event, the country's unique origins make an extraordinary story, from which Robert Hughes has fashioned the dinkum article, a very good book.

GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

Geoffrey Wheatcroft is a columnist with the *Sunday Telegraph* of London and the author of *The Randlords: The Exploits and Exploitations of South Africa's Mining Magnates*, to be reissued in paperback by Touchstone this June.

ONE LIFE TO LIVE

The Great American Magazine: An Inside History of Life by Loudon Wainwright

(Knopf, 443 pp., \$19.95)

Life: The First Fifty Years, 1936-1986 edited by Philip B. Kunhardt Jr.

(Little, Brown, 319 pp., \$50)

Of all the sad developments in publishing in recent years, the saddest is the list of Time Inc.'s new magazines: *Southern Living*, *Parenting*, *New York-New Jersey-Connecticut-Real Estate*, *Working Mother*, *Quality* ("The Best of Everything"), *Leisure*, and *Home Office*. Time Inc. has been reduced to micropublishing, to finding little niches of alleged demand and exploiting them. Henry Luce didn't think that way. He was interested only in big deals—the world (*Time*), business (*Fortune*), sports

(*Sports Illustrated*), and, of course, *Life*.

There were four large general-interest magazines in America in 1956, each with a circulation of more than four million: *Collier's*, *Look*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and, the largest, *Life*. Sixteen years later, only *Life* was left. In 1972 it failed as a weekly and began coming out twice a year with special issues ("100 Events That Shaped America," "Remarkable American Women"). Then, in 1978, *Life* went monthly. Today it has a circulation

of 1.5 million, down from an all-time high of 8.5 million in 1970, after it took over the circulations of its dead competitors.

At its peak, *Life* was America's best magazine—as journalism and as business. What made it so good? And why did it fall? The glib answer to the second question is television. TV did help to kill *Life*, but not for the reason most people think. Television changed the way Americans look at the world; it made them more sophisticated and more cynical. It educated the subjects of photographs to be on their guard and the viewers of photographs to understand that the subjects were on their guard. It was this shift in aesthetics and psychology, not in economics, that mortally wounded *Life* 25 years ago.

When Luce decided to launch a picture magazine in 1936, he didn't run Lotus projections on his computer. He didn't commission a market survey. He didn't even hire a fancy art director to do a mock-up (he found someone at Macy's). Luce knew what he wanted. "Something just had to be done about pictures," he wrote by way of apology to an old teacher at Hotchkiss, who couldn't understand why Luce would put *Time* and *Fortune* in jeopardy on a whim. Actually, *Life* had first been Clare Boothe Luce's idea, when she was working for Condé Nast. *Vanity Fair*, writes Wilfrid Sheed in his biography of Clare, "was sinking gracefully toward oblivion back in '33 and '34," and all hands were asked "to submit dummies for possible new magazines." Clare's was a picture magazine that sounded a lot like what would become *Life*. (She even suggested buying a moribund humor magazine to get the name.) Sheed writes: "By the . . . fateful third meeting, Clare had got across to Harry her plans for *Life* magazine, and in his headstrong romantic way Luce announced, 'I don't want any more babies, but if you marry me, I'll start your magazine.'" He married her and he started the magazine. But it wasn't hers; Luce's editors cut her out, and he didn't stick up for her.

The point is that *Life* was originated out of a vision, not out of a desire to meet a perceived market demand. It was pure supply-side publishing. With his friend Archibald MacLeish, who had been a little ahead of him at Yale and who was then writing for *Fortune*, Luce collaborated on what must stand as the most lyrical business prospectus ever written. It described the purpose of the magazine:

To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things—machines, armies, multitudes, shadows in the jungle and on the moon; to see man's work—his paintings, towers and discoveries; to see things thousands of miles away, things hidden behind walls and within rooms, things dangerous to come to; the women that men love and many children; to see and to take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed.

Thus, to see, and to be shown, is now the will and new expectancy of half mankind.

It is important to recall that at the time these cadences were conceived they were not banalities. The small, unobtrusive camera, a German Leica with a fast lens, had just been invented; and candid photography, which meant taking pictures without impedimenta or ceremony, was brand-new. Remember that before the Leica, and before Luce's enormous travel budgets, most readers hadn't seen the world, or had seen it only stiffly posed. And the candid camera excited photographers no less than viewers. Henri Cartier-Bresson, for example, wrote about this little machine:

I went to Marseille. A small allowance enabled me to get along, and I worked with enjoyment. I had just discovered the Leica. It became the extension of my eye, and I have never been separated from it since I found it. I prowled the streets all day, feeling very strung-up and ready to pounce, determined to "trap" life—to preserve life in the act of living. Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes.

Looking at back issues of *Life* today, it is difficult to understand how powerful the connection this new photography made with readers really was. The pictures in the book *Life: The First Fifty Years*—and in the special anniversary issue, "Life: 50 Years" (which is just as good as the book at one-tenth the price)—are still appealing. In fact, they are addictive. This is a book you will leaf through, head down, for two or three hours. But where we find our pleasure today is in history, or in irony, or in camp. It is safe to say that *Life's* original readers didn't see its photographs that way. Luce was not an ironist, and neither were most of his editors. John Shaw Billings, for example, the magazine's first managing editor, was a quiet, simple man who fastidiously kept a diary. His entry on the final deadline day for Vol-

ume 1, Number 1: "F. [his wife, Frederica] went to the hairdressers and spent \$38 on a wave, etc. . . . We dined at Schrafft's and went to the Plaza to see Gary Cooper in *The General Died at Dawn*." If Billings or Edward Thompson, *Life's* great editor of the '50s and a graduate of the University of North Dakota, had been too sophisticated, too condescending, too insincere, *Life* would never have worked.

Instead, the root appeal of *Life* in its glory years, from 1936 to the late '50s, was its ingenuousness, its uncomplicated love for its subjects. Loudon Wainwright, who spent 29 years at the magazine, writes of Dan Longwell, an early editor:

In those innocent days when seeing a story told in pictures was new, Longwell had the gift of being unembarrassed when he suggested a story on wheat or college girls or garden clubs. He was afflicted with a sort of all-seeing naïveté, he took a daisy-fresh view of the obvious, and it paid off again and again for the young magazine.

But naïveté alone would not have been enough. *Life* was good because its photographers were good: Alfred Eisenstaedt, Margaret Bourke-White, Hansel Mieth, Carl Mydans, Fritz Goro, W. Eugene Smith, Ed Clark, Robert Capa. Many of them were refugees from Middle Europe; like their compatriots in Hollywood, they combined an Expressionist palette with an affectionate, almost (but not quite) sentimental feeling for America.

WHEN *Life* began there were picture magazines in Europe, but none in America. Luce was smart enough to bring a German genius named Kurt Korff over to give advice. Hardly anyone at Time Inc. knew about photography or layout. So Korff clearly, aphoristically showed the editors how to do it:

You will never forget: Sometimes it is sufficient to have *one* very good, thrilling artistic picture . . . in one issue. Having seen only one picture in a magazine, a picture which he never forgets, the reader will open this illustrated magazine wherever he finds it.

And "Try to have in every number pictures which depict lovely forms of animal life." And "It doesn't matter whether a certain group of readers is offended. To assail in an honest manner is always better than to bore. You get the attention of a large circle."

The numbers in the *Life* prospectus were plucked from thin air. Luce figured that *Life* would have a circulation of

200,000 the first year, and that it would take 500,000 to break even. An investment of \$1 million, he told his board, should ride the magazine over until it reached that point. If not, *Life* would go to "an honorable grave." Instead of 200,000, the circulation of the first issue of *Life* was 466,000. The entire newsstand order—250,000 copies—was sold out the first day. By the end of 1937, its first full year, circulation was 1.5 million. In fact, the magazine was such a hit that it almost bankrupted Luce. He had guaranteed advertisers rates based on a circulation of 250,000 (\$2,500 for a full-page color ad) and had agreed not to raise those rates for a year. As with nearly all magazines, the circulation side was a money loser. So in that first year, *Life*, undercharging for its ads, lost \$5 million. Very soon, though, it became the most profitable consumer magazine in history.

Wainwright, a former columnist and editor at *Life*, has written a book that tells us a great deal about how the magazine functioned, especially about its insouciant editors at work and play ("Liquor wasn't everything at *Life*, but it was a lot"). But Wainwright has a hard time answering the tougher questions about

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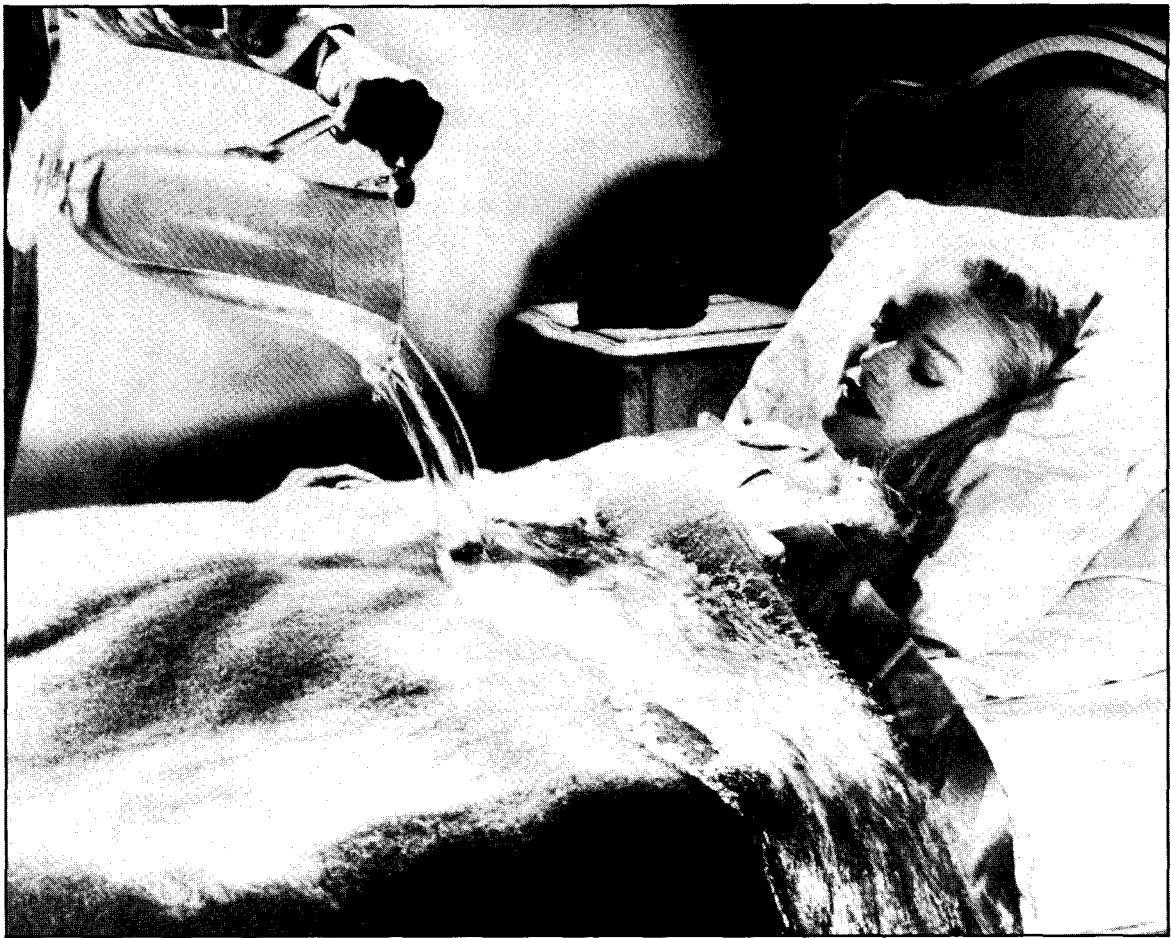
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Life's success and failure. He describes the first issue, for example, as having

the quality of an album jammed with snapshots the collector couldn't bear to throw away. Its look was earnest, amateurish and cluttered, its tone was variously wide-eyed, sentimental, smart-aleck, smug and foolish. Quite possibly, these were just the qualities that in some magical, quite indefinable mix (though Luce and his editors spent the next thirty-five years trying to isolate, define and capture the recipe) would guarantee *Life's* immediate and long-lasting success.

Locutions like "magical, quite indefinable mix" don't explain much. But Wainwright is on to something: "A lot of people liked the magazine precisely because, in a national sense, it had the quality of a hometown journal, a journal that readers could open up each week and find, vicariously speaking, fascinating items about themselves." *Life*, in other words, was a mirror. And it is Wainwright's theory that in good times, Americans want to look into a mirror; in bad times, they don't. In the '50s, he writes, *Life*

was a place where millions of people could discover modern American life, be stimulated by it and feel part of it. Later, in

the 1960s, as Americans saw the fragmentation of their society and were devastated by its implications, that mirror link between the magazine and its readers would weaken greatly. In many ways, *Life* in the 1960s looked better and offered its audience a more beautiful, thoughtful, balanced, imaginative mix of stories. But it did not, apparently, show the readers what they wanted to see of themselves, and it never had the power and drive of the earlier magazine.

It's true that people like to look at things they have already seen. That's the secret of *Sports Illustrated*, a magazine that replays the football games its readers have watched a few days earlier on television. When an automobile accident takes place in front of our eyes, we always check out the next morning's paper to see a story about it or a picture. A good photograph, like a good idea, contains something familiar. ("Pre-sold" is the way *Variety* puts it.) But the image can't be too hackneyed or obvious, or the reader will quickly turn the page. One of *Life's* most attractive themes, the reassurance it provided its readers, was that the strange is also the normal. The cover story in the first issue, for exam-

ple, was an affecting photo essay by Bourke-White (with text by MacLeish) on a small town in Montana where New Deal relief workers were building the Fort Peck Dam. The focus of the piece was a bar on Saturday night, where a little blond girl sat on the counter and men in caps drank beer. While it would have been easy to present this scene in a grotesque way—it isn't hard to imagine what Richard Avedon might have produced, in the light of his recent book on the West: ugly head-on collisions with the camera—Bourke-White's pictures are connected, rich, almost cheerful. And they are, all the way from Montana, familiar.

Another good example of this approach was Smith's "Country Doctor," a portrait of a small-town physician in Colorado on his rounds—11 pages with headlines like "An Accident Interrupts His Leisure," "He Sets a Badly Dislocated Elbow," and "An Old Man Dies at Night." And there were other photo essays on generic subjects with similar resonances: Eisenstaedt's "Steelworker," Ralph Morse's "Wounded Soldier," Leonard McCombe's "Career Girl," and Smith's "Nurse-Midwife." The aesthetic

might be called Capitalist Realism: upbeat, reserved, matter-of-fact, Gary Cooperish.

Just as *Life* made the odd familiar, it also made the familiar odd. "Like a pair of binoculars with no right or wrong end," Susan Sontag remarks in *On Photography*, "the camera makes exotic things near, intimate; and familiar things small, abstract, strange, much farther away." *Life*, in fact, examined the commonplace with a microscope. It showed us what we were missing right under our noses. A silly example of this theme was a feature on what women carry in their purses. A literal example was Lennart Nilsson's wonderful medical photography: pictures of red blood cells magnified 10,000 times and the like. A serious example was the 24-page list in the July 5, 1943, issue of the names of all 12,987 Americans killed in the first 18 months of World War II. Thirty years later, *Life* published "One Week's Dead," mugshots of 217 men killed in a single week in Vietnam. Both pieces were forerunners of the black marble Vietnam War Memorial in Washington.

THE EARLY ISSUES of *Life*, the first ten years or so, had a playful quality to them. The candid camera and the oversized page were new toys. Look what you could do! There was Allan Grant's gorgeous, erotic, almost surrealist photograph of 1946, which pictured a Veronica Lake-type lying in bed, oblivious to someone pouring a pitcher of water on her stomach. (The photo's actual subject was an electric blanket safety demonstration.) There was a full-page picture of all 100 entries in the first Pillsbury Bake-off. And there were terrific gimmicks: "The Birth of a Baby," a sequence of photos presented in 1938 with seriousness and titillation; an exercise in which the magazine asked eight architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, to design houses for families making \$2,000 to \$10,000 a year; and "American Sunday," in which 16 photographers throughout the country took pictures on a single day. (*Life* repeated this idea with 100 photographers in a special issue 30 years later, in 1974; it was copied again last year in *Newsweek* and in a best-selling book, *A Day in the Life of America*, with the ante raised to 400 photographers.)

There was also racism and stupidity. From the first issue: "Brazilians are charming people, but are incurably lazy. The original Portuguese conquistadors

did not bring their wives, married Indian aborigines, and their descendants added the blood of Negro slaves to the strain. The mixture did not work." In 1941, *Life* ran a full page with annotated pictures headlined "How to Tell Japs from the Chinese." ("Japs" have "massive cheek and jawbone . . . flatter nose . . .") And it was continually doing articles like "Life Goes to a Slumber Party," a Howdy Doody look-alike contest, and tips for women on how to smoke.

Luce, says Wainwright, thought of *Life* as a "nice, lovable, giving sort of a publication, blunt maybe but not feisty or arrogant in its views." Luce was continually trying to explain the magazine's personality to his editors. "It is the nature of *Life* to be for things," he wrote in a memo:

Life likes life. . . . And curiously this attitude of *Life's* . . . arose from the nature of pictures. . . . You print a picture of a dog, and most of the time you simply cannot say simply "This is a dog." You have to say "Isn't this a nice, cute doggy-woggy," or "I never saw such a damn mongrel son of a bitch." So, if you're going to edit a picture magazine, you have to make up your mind whether you are going to print mostly pictures of nice doggies or mostly of mongrel bitches. Unless you are definitely morbid and sadistic, your decision will inevitably be to seek pictures of nice doggies. That is, you will desire and plan to sing out the good news and you will sing out the bad news only when you are compelled to do so by conscience or other journalistic necessity.

WHAT WENT WRONG? To begin with, in the '60s the nice doggy-woggies began to disappear. *Life* became compelled by conscience to run pictures of mongrel sons of bitches, like the Zapruder film of the Dallas motorcade and Larry Burrows on Vietnam. But something else was going on as well. Both the subjects and the viewers of photography had become more conscious of the camera—especially with the boom in TV news after the Kennedy assassination. The subjects learned the conventions, knew what was expected of them; and the readers became aware that the subjects were, in effect, posing. The spontaneity was gone, because of the camera's very success. The American population had learned the visual and emotional habits of a world on film.

The *Life* of the '60s and '70s was perhaps more "beautiful" and "thoughtful," but it was also less real—and readers knew it. A good example was David

Hume Kennerly's photograph of Gerald Ford posing with his toaster in the White House in 1974. Another was the way that *Life* handled the first astronauts. It bought the rights to their exclusive stories for \$500,000 and gave them and NASA editing privileges. Thus, headlines like this one about John Glenn: "An Unswerving and Self Denying Man Engaged in a Stern, Dangerous Pursuit," and obvious setups, such as a photo of Annie Glenn clasping her hands together and lighting up when she hears that her husband has splashed down safely. We later learned the truth about Annie and John Glenn from Tom Wolfe, and it was a lot more interesting than *Life* had made it. The neatest irony of all is that *Life*, which had done so much duping, was finally duped itself—by Clifford Irving's Howard Hughes biography.

THE CANDID CAMERA is no longer possible. It has made itself obsolete. Almost everything that is captured on a page becomes tamed; it exists as a convention, in a controlled cultural setting. In fact, the camera has gone from being an explorer to an exploiter, from discovery to distortion, often replacing the beauty or the horror of real things. Daniel Boorstin has written that when someone praises a baby in the park, its mother responds, "Oh, but you should see his picture!" And Sontag says, conversely, that we have become so "image-surfeited" that we "find sunsets corny; they now look, alas, too much like photographs." More because of television than because of still photography, surprise and shock have become almost completely things of the past. We have all learned to be actors. Thus, for example, the families of hostages know precisely what is expected of them when the TV lights come on and the microphones are shoved in their faces in the midst of the most terrible grief. They have the lines and the gestures memorized. For a picture magazine—not to speak of a society—this is an intolerable situation.

Life worked best when Americans were younger and less knowing. Look at the two-page photograph from 1943 of Louis B. Mayer and his 60 stars. It is a posed picture of actors and actresses who hadn't yet learned how to present themselves in a totally guarded way (that is, in a guarded way that looks unguarded). You can stare at it for an hour. Mayer's socks are too short. William Powell and Mickey Rooney are looking in the wrong direction. Lucille Ball seems

unhappy (has she just had a fight with Desi?). And why are the three actors in uniform, including a curiously blurry Jimmy Stewart, shuffled off to the outer limits of the picture?

Life developed two other problems as it got older: words and color. The folks at Time Inc., including Luce, had what Wainwright calls "the old shamefaced embarrassment of journalists who aren't really convinced that pictures are quite in a class with words." *Life* in the '60s and '70s became weighted down with words, including, of all things, fiction by Roald Dahl. Words removed it even further from the world, especially when the magazine began to load up its pages with . . . critics.

Color contributed to a kind of overartfulness in *Life*, depriving readers of the feeling that they were seeing something immediate. The reason that the current, monthly version of *Life* seems so dead is this same feeling of too much design, too much heavy paper, too much prettiness. In a strange irony, color is almost too much for viewers to bear. It is too aggressive. We are repelled by its insistence. Finally its very verisimilitude begins to look false. Oddly enough, we frequently find black-and-white pictures more real because we're willing to look at them longer and more closely. The absence of color seems to honor our distance from the subject, to respect the difference between the viewer at home and the picture of far away. Color, particularly the lush kind, tends to obliterate that difference.

BUT THE WEEKLY *Life* wasn't killed by aesthetics alone. Bad business decisions played an important role. *Life*, like the other general-interest magazines, responded to the commercial threat of television in precisely the wrong way: instead of getting smaller, leaving the masses and the mass advertisers to the tube, they tried to get bigger. What's remarkable about this mistake is that it persists today. *Time*, with a circulation of 4.6 million, and *Newsweek*, with 3.1 million, are far too big. They have to give away watches, telephones, and 35-millimeter cameras to find new subscribers; and more than half of those subscribers don't renew. The cost of finding a new body to replace one that drops out can be \$50 or more.

Collier's, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Look* all went under, and *Life* ended up picking up their subscribers, inflating its own circulation to 8.5 million. But at

least half of those copies went to families that didn't really want the magazine. Wainwright cites a Time Inc. executive named Howard Black, who argued that "the magazine should stop pushing ahead for more and more readers, and concentrate on acquiring the best possible 4 million subscribers and selling the magazine to advertisers—at reduced rates—on the basis of the high quality of the audience." Black was right, but no one listened. In the end, in 1972, the weekly *Life* couldn't afford the cost of maintaining its high circulation, and shut down.

Did *Life* have to die? If we accept Wainwright's theory of the mirror, the magazine should be thriving in the '80s. We like ourselves today, no? *USA Today* tells us we do. In fact, *USA Today* is the

Life magazine of 1987. But somehow the charts and polls and splashes of color aren't enough. Neither is the personality and triviality journalism of *People*. Neither is TV news. And television is finally artifice, swirling by. Great photography made the world hold still, so that we could genuinely look at it. But that was before the tyranny of marketing, which reduces the world to discrete "demanding" audiences. Can America support a big, general-interest magazine? Of course it can. Four magazines today have higher circulations than *Life* ever did. But maybe we'll have to find another Luce. He's certainly not at Time Inc., where they're busy making magazines about parenting and houses for sale in the suburbs.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

VOLUNTEER VISIONARIES

The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas

(Simon and Schuster, 853 pp., \$22.95)

In the summer of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson invited a group of distinguished American elder statesmen to counsel him on the war in Indochina. Three in particular were asked in for a private chat at the White House: Robert A. Lovett, a Wall Street investment banker and former undersecretary of state and secretary of defense, who more than anyone else taught the United States the importance of strategic air power; John J. McCloy Jr., a Wall Street lawyer who was chairman of the Chase bank and of the Council on Foreign Relations, a former assistant secretary of war, postwar U.S. consul in Germany, and president of the World Bank; and former secretary of state Dean Acheson, who was reviled by conservatives in his day as an appeaser but who stands out more and more clearly in retrospect as the chief architect of the American global commitment against communism after World War II, and so, perhaps, after Josef Stalin, the man who did more than anyone else to create the world we still inhabit.

The president was in a dark and doubting mood. "I blew my top," Ach-

eson recalled later, "and told him he was wholly right on Vietnam. With this lead my colleagues came thundering in like the charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo." Two years later, however, Acheson's suppressed doubts about the Vietnam War, and his not-so-suppressed disdain for Johnson, burst out in uncharacteristically uncouth fashion. He stalked out of a meeting with the president, and when an aide called to ask why, he replied memorably, "You tell the President—and you tell him in precisely these words—that he can take Vietnam and stick it up his ass."

Then, in March 1968, a few weeks after the Tet offensive, came another, much chronicled meeting. It was the last. The elder statesmen, known in the government as the Wise Old Men or, less reverently, as "WOMs," and in the press as "the usual suspects," were assembled once again to ratify the judgment of one of their number. Clark Clifford, the newly installed secretary of defense, had concluded that the war in Vietnam could not be won. The president's national security adviser, Walt Rostow, who had once pined for the approval of

the Wise Old Men and now rejected them as faithless, recalled later what went through his head. "I thought to myself that what began in the spring of 1940 when Henry Stimson came to Washington ended tonight. The American Establishment is dead."

THE WISE MEN is not a history of the American foreign policy establishment. Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas have set out to do something more limited, more concentrated. They have woven together the lives of six men to fashion a fascinating study of the makers, and the making, of American foreign policy during the cold war years, when it became set in concrete. Their subjects are Robert A. Lovett and John J. McCloy; Dean Acheson and Averell Harriman; Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen and George Kennan. Of course the selection is somewhat arbitrary. The authors themselves wonder out loud why they did not add Paul Nitze or James Forrestal. Other names suggest themselves: Clark Clifford, George Ball, David Bruce. Were the Dulles brothers members of the establishment? Of course they were. But of the *same* establishment as Acheson and Harriman? One cannot help observing that any group whose members include George Kennan and Paul Nitze must be considered ideologically loose-knit.

Two bankers, two lawyers, two diplomats. No academics, unless you consider that Kennan's distinguished second career entitles him to be considered an academic rather than a diplomat. No journalists, of course, though the Alsop brothers were trusted to come to the Sunday Night Drunk, as one Georgetown ritual was candidly known. No generals, no admirals, no elected officials (although Harriman did surprise his friends by getting elected governor of New York, after having surprised some of them even more by wanting to run for office in the first place). All products of famous private universities. One very rich man (Harriman), the rest all raised in various degrees of modest affluence and gentility.

Lovett's father was Harriman's father's lawyer. Acheson's father was an Episcopalian bishop. Bohlen's family were independently wealthy American gentry, collaterally related to the Krupps of Essen. Kennan's family, if provincials from Wisconsin, were traveled, affluent, and intellectual. Only McCloy came from outside the charmed circle of luxu-

ry, though even his social handicaps should not be exaggerated: he did, after all, attend private secondary schools, Amherst, and Harvard Law School. Harvard and Yale were as inevitable and as invaluable in that world as Oxbridge in Whitehall. The values and influence of the Reverend Endicott Peabody, rector of Groton and licensed importer into the United States of the Victorian ideal of the Christian gentleman, are never wholly out of sight in the background of any of these six lives.

ISAACSON AND THOMAS have painted in the background of their league of gentlemen with a very sure touch. I like the description, for example, of Bohlen's lifestyle in 1947:

He was as usual broke, but poverty was highly relative in postwar Washington. He owned a small, charming Georgetown house, book-lined, with Oriental rugs and a garden out back, of the type later bought by successful lobbyists for several hundred thousand dollars.

It was, Bohlen's son dryly said many years later, "decorated in the Episcopal manner."

If Acheson, Lovett, McCloy, Kennan, Bohlen, and Harriman were central figures of what has come to be called the American foreign policy establishment, though, it was not because they were especially rich or unusually smart in the social sense. Since Henry Fairlie borrowed the word "establishment"—originally used in England to refer to the Anglican Church—to describe that little cluster of well-connected people who still ran Britain in the 1950s, deep confusion has grown up about its connotations. It does not mean "the rich" or even "the upper class," though doubtless many of its members were both well-to-do and well-born, and many had a penchant for Harris tweed jackets and hunting prints. (I have myself seen Cyrus Vance wearing a suit so hairy that he must have been overwarm even in an English country house.) Such interesting cultural traits are not essential to the idea of the establishment. Fairlie used the word in England, and Richard Rovere borrowed it in the United States, to pin down that loose group of people who had access to patronage, power, and policy.

The six subjects of Isaacson and Thomas's book were largely concerned with American policy toward the Soviet Union. Three of them—Harriman, Bohlen, and Kennan—can be said to have

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been Soviet specialists. The orthodox account of the policy that they helped to fashion—and it is an account to which, as capable self-publicists, several of the group largely contributed—is that, becoming aware of the Soviet threat to Western Europe, they took the lead in persuading President Truman, Congress, and the various organs of American public opinion that it was necessary, in Acheson's phrase, to stand at Armageddon and do battle for the Lord. The story continues that this act of persuasion, and the institutions it created (such as the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), saved Europe from Soviet domination and laid the foundations for a worldwide network of alliances that will enable the United States to keep the peace for ever and ever, amen.

WE SHALL NEVER know how accurate this conventional view is, since we cannot be certain what Stalin's plans for Western Europe really were, or how he and his successors might have reacted to alternative policies in the West, whether tougher or more accommodating. The conventional view, in any case, has come under fire from both sides of the ideological river in recent years. Even before the Korean War, conservatives suspected that the establishment's foreign policy simply underestimated the malevolence and the danger of communism—if, indeed, as some conservatives more or less disingenuously believed, some of its members were not secretly sympathetic to communism. According to the conservative account, this establishment unnecessarily endangered the United States. At the opposite pole, there is what is called the "revisionist" view—that it was American policy-makers, including some key members of the establishment, who were largely responsible for the cold war. Their words and their actions, it is argued, induced a justified belief on the part of Stalin and his coadjutors that the Soviet Union was being surrounded, perhaps in preparation for being destroyed. In this view, the establishment unnecessarily endangered the rest of the world.

Both these views, which certainly owe more to ideological assumptions than to history, have always missed the point. One of the merits of *The Wise Men* is that it shows how in reality the establishment's policy toward the Soviet Union, and subsequently toward the global containment of communism, changed in re-

sponse to changing perceptions of the nature of the Soviet threat.

The change is at once clearest and most coherent in the case of Kennan. For all his love of the Russian people and the Russian language—the authors tell a revealing anecdote about him sitting as a virtual prisoner in the American Embassy in Moscow at the nadir of the cold war, reading Russian poetry aloud for his sheer pleasure at the sound of it—Kennan was the first to measure the danger implied by Stalin's ambitions and Stalin's fears. The authors put it with elegant brevity:

For ten years he had been ineffectively fretting about the dangers of American mellowness towards the Soviets. Within three years he would be fretting about the dangers of American militarism. But for a brief and critical period, Kennan's outlook and the pendulum of official U.S. thinking coincided.

But the same is just as true of Acheson. The causes of his conversion to a hard-line stance toward the Soviet Union are complex, and would repay study these days. They include the evidence of the Iran crisis of 1946, which seemed to teach that Stalin reacted favorably to tough handling—and to the influence of Kennan. And what was true of Kennan and Acheson, on the specific question of Soviet intentions and the appropriate counter to them, it seems to me was true on a larger scale of the whole group Isaacson and Thomas have studied. Their policy was not so much centrist, though it looked that way, as Janus-faced.

TO A MAN, they were Anglophiles. Yet perhaps their most lasting life-work was the replacement of British power with American power, not least in the Middle East. They were anti-communist, yet they feared and resented anti-communism. They were patriotic, yet they feared and even secretly despised American nationalism. They were concerned with building a worldwide shield of military alliances, yet they feared (and perhaps secretly despised) the military. They were, say the authors, pragmatists, multilateralists, convinced that American security would be best protected not by territorial control, but by the creation of a free, democratic alliance. And "above all they were imbued with a special sense of destiny involving both America's role and their own." Safety, in a nuclear age, demanded American leadership: very well, that

was a commodity they felt they were specially qualified to provide.

The central question about the Wise Men and their friends is how it came about that, at a crucial turning point in American history, they should have exercised decisive influence over American policy without either the sanction of democratic election or (except for the diplomats among them) the legitimation of the public service. With the exception of the career foreign service officers, Kennan and Bohlen, they were in-and-outers, dollar-a-year men, amateurs. That explains the infectious charm of their seigneurial style. For a long time, however, it has been accepted that "the foreign policy community" should largely consist of such self-appointed do-gooders. Perhaps it is worth emphasizing how very odd, historically and by the standards of other democracies, this is. In virtually all Western countries, both interest groups and individuals with ideas can have a say in policy-making. Still, everywhere except in the United States, formulating policy has been the responsibility of democratically elected politicians, and carrying it out the function of specialist, trained career officials.

It can be argued—it probably would be argued by the heirs of the Stimson/Acheson tradition—that Wall Street lawyers and other like-minded people had to step forward and pick up the torch of American leadership because there was no one else equipped with the experience of international affairs to do so. That begs large questions, though. A more realistic explanation of what happened is that the rise of the Axis and the bombing of Pearl Harbor so discredited the so-called "isolationists" (many of whom were more concerned with opposing an entangling alliance with Britain or an exclusive orientation toward Europe than with isolation in the true sense of the word) that the "internationalists" of the establishment became the men of the hour. What is more natural than that an internationalist president, FDR, should turn to men of his own mind to carry out his policies? And once brought to Washington by FDR, Acheson, Lovett, McCloy, and the rest naturally stayed on to help out poor Harry Truman.

Whether you think the postwar dominance of the Eastern establishment was quite so natural, quite so innocent, it is surely more than a little curious that the United States, until two-thirds of the way into the century of the Common

Man, should have entrusted so large a share in the formulation of its foreign policy to so privileged a class of janissaries. It is even stranger that a society that valued, even worshiped, professionalism in business, in academic life, and in every other field, should have entrusted the conduct of diplomacy and national security policy to amateurs.

Perhaps that reflected a semiconscious belief that the United States, unlike less powerful countries, could afford not to be wholly serious about foreign policy. What other country, after all, would have dispensed almost entirely with the talents of a Dean Acheson after the age of 60? But there was far more to it than that. At one level the dominance of the gentleman-amateur was an unforeseen consequence of the ancient American suspicion of government, and therefore of professional bureaucrats. Professionals might be all very well in the Marine Corps, in the FBI, even in the Mint or the Bureau of Standards. But government, surely, was too suspect to be a matter for professionals. Or rather, government was too important for them to be trusted with it.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, the influence of the establishment was a consequence of the way the modern presidency developed in isolation from Congress. And that, in turn, no doubt reflects the elitist suspicions of electoral politics that many progressives, in particular, harbored. Several of the key influences on the foreign policy establishment, after all, including Elihu Root and Henry Stimson, grew up in the Teddy Roosevelt tradition of upper-class "good government." They handed down to many of their successors a more or less carefully concealed contempt for the demos. Indeed, generally, and not only in foreign policy, the modern presidency—as first glimpsed by Teddy Roosevelt, sketched by Wilson, and molded by FDR—relied on talented individuals brought in from private life to be the personal servants of the man in the White House. Already in the days of the "Inquiry"—the secret research project into postwar policy run for Woodrow Wilson by Colonel House; Colonel House's brother-in-law Sidney Mezes; Colonel House's son-in-law's law partner, David Hunter Miller; and a few more such well-connected fellows—a president showed that he would take far more account of what a handful of clever young men, personally loyal to him, had

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What are the facts?

■ In 1948, on the day of the proclamation of the State of Israel, five Arab armies invaded the new country from all sides. In frightful radio broadcasts, they urged the Arabs living there to leave, so that the invading armies could operate without interference. They could return after the expected quick victory in that "holy war", get their property back—and that of the Jews. Things turned out differently. The invading armies were defeated. Those who had left became refugees—people without a country. Those who stayed, and their children, are full-fledged citizens of the State of Israel.

■ These so-called "Palestinian refugees" have not been allowed to settle in the "indivisible Arab nation". They have been supported in camps since 1948. So far, close to \$1.7 billion has been spent on their maintenance. No end is in sight. Who pays for that? You guessed it: through UNWRA Relief, the United States contributes more than 60% of the total cost.

■ But there is another side to the "refugee" story. Little is heard of the 800,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries, who fled those countries to settle in the newly formed Jewish state of Israel. Every one of these refugees was immediately accepted, resettled, taken care of, and given full citizenship by the fledgling, impoverished, and embattled Jewish State. There never has been, and there certainly is not now, a Jewish "refugee camp" in Israel or anywhere else.

■ The Arab refugees who fled Israel left little wealth and little history, since most of them had not come to "Palestine" until Jewish settlers opened economic opportunities in what had been a desolate country for centuries. But the Jews of Arab lands have a history going back thousands of years. When forced to flee, they left behind land, wealth, and a long history. They arrived in Israel, quite literally, only "with their shirts on their backs". They now make up 55% of the vibrant and productive population of Israel. What have the Arabs, the richest people in the world, done with "their" refugees in almost 40 years? They have kept them in misery, on the dole of the world, have taught their hopeless youth the "skills" of suicide missions and of slaughtering defenseless and unarmed men, women, and children.

■ Population transfers have been widely practiced throughout history. In 1923, Greece and Turkey agreed to the resettlement of 2 million Greeks and 800,000 Turks; in 1945, the resettlement of 3 million Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia was arranged. Following the collapse of its North African empire, France accepted close to 1.5 million people. More than 12 million(!) Muslims and Hindus were exchanged between India and Pakistan. Israel has recognized this historical necessity. The "Arab Nation", with its enormous wealth and vast, underpopulated lands, has stubbornly refused to face facts.

It is clear that the "Palestinian refugee problem" is a red herring, a phony issue, kept alive by the Arab nations for their political purposes, and with cynical disregard for the almost 600,000 impoverished people who still lead a sub-human existence in these camps. If the "Palestinian refugee problem" were to be solved—and it could disappear virtually overnight—the legitimacy of the State of Israel could no longer be questioned. But that is not acceptable to the Arabs. They are firmly committed not to allow any "non-believers" to be in control of any part of the Middle East. It is that, and that alone, which is the real cause of the "Palestinian refugee problem".

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to say than he would take of Congress. Of course Wilson and his treaty both paid the price.

With the coming of World War II, and certainly with the coming of the cold war and the nuclear age, presidents became even less inclined to trust Congress with the great questions of foreign and national security policy. Public opinion, accustomed by the sheer success of FDR to look to the president for national leadership, was happy to go along. That was the establishment's opportunity, and the discreet, confident pragmatists from Wall Street knew how to take it. Their instinct was for the center, and for the shadows. Their policies were rarely well understood, perhaps because they did not attach a very high priority to explaining them.

In the last analysis, that may be why, except in the brief years between 1945 and 1950, they were more vulnerable,

even more marginal, than they seemed. They could only act when their instincts chanced to coincide with the pendulum swings of a democracy that cared far less than they did about foreign policy, that did not share their dream of building a liberal American empire on the ruins of pax Britannica. They seized their moment, though, and they deserve our gratitude. For if these were elitist, even arrogant men, they also built better than most of those who have come after them.

Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas have not gone to the bottom of the suggestive historical questions raised by their narrative. That task awaits other writers. In the meantime, they are owed admiration for a superbly realized collective biography.

GODFREY HODGSON

Godfrey Hodgson is the author most recently of *Lloyd's of London* (Viking).

THE FALL GUY

In Time and Place by John Hollander

(The Johns Hopkins University Press, 101 pp., \$16.50, \$7.95 paper)

John Hollander has been a formidable presence in American literary life for a quarter century now. His work as scholar, teacher, and editor is held in high esteem, and no critic of poetry is his superior. Where many provide ingenious readings of poems, he actually *listens* to a poem's inner workings and secret harmonies, its encoded dialogue with other poems. *Vision and Resonance* (1975) and *The Figure of Echo* (1981) have more to teach about the way poems are put together, and the ways that delight becomes instruction, than any books I know. But his true importance is as a poet, and to judge by the crudest measures—critical reckonings and anthology appearances—Hollander's poems are either merely respected or totally ignored. I suspect the reason is that many readers don't know how to place him. They are uneasy about the "difficulty" of his work. But is he any more difficult than several more widely appreciated poets—say, John Ashbery or James Merrill?

Yes and no. Like the professional diviner, every poet declares a "degree of diffi-

culty" that must then be factored into any judgment of his performance. Merrill raises the lyric to a new power and asks us to multiply autobiography by myth. Ashbery deliberately leads us away from conventionalized "meanings" and into a congeries of voices that daydream out loud. And each time we solve a poem by either, it becomes more puzzling. Hollander's poems are difficult in the same way—at once compelling and elusive—but their demands on a reader are of a different order.

Many of his critics have misprized the development and disciplines of Hollander's work either by repeating an early impression of him as an academic *flâneur*, or by echoing R. P. Blackmur on Donne and finding him violent in his constructed emotions and private with actual secrecy of meaning. Over the years, Hollander has extended his poetic ideas far beyond the "easy" solutions offered by the metaphysical lyric or the verse epistle. This is one reason why the best—that is to say, the most challenging—of his recent books have been se-

quences. They are themselves elaborate interpretations that ask to be interpreted. Hollander *reads into* things, and the results require the sort of scrupulous pondering that dreams or scripture do. In short, his poems are parables, or models of experience. Borges, Kafka, and Wallace Stevens come to mind as avatars. Parables are among the least sparing or beautiful forms of poetry. They take away our feelings and give us better fictions instead. They analyze our consolations, harp on our debts and deceits. But the imaginative energy they bring to this task of disenchantment is itself a kind of compassion. Few poets are equal to it. Hollander, more than any of his peers, is writing this kind of demanding poetry. Again, like the diver twisting backward in the air, hovering impossibly in the sun before his plunge, the difficulties of a Hollander poem are formidable, and therefore exhilarating.

Though it will be cataloged under poetry, *In Time and Place* is actually a hybrid of verse and prose, the extremes on either side of "poetry." It is characteristic of Hollander to have situated himself at the extreme edges, for a longer view. One of his prose poems puts it this way: "We have, after all, to be grateful that our light lies broken in pieces: were we to have to live in the generality of it, without the beneficence of the shady (no matter how questionable now, always), it would be unbearable." Verse and prose, then, are the two shades from which he looks out on the bright confusions of our lives.

The book begins with a sequence of 35 short poems called "In Time." They resemble the texts for a lieder cycle, fragments of grief over lost love that gather into song. They turn on a broken marriage, the end of a life together, and so it's appropriate that they are all written in the so-called *In Memoriam* stanza, the ebb and flow of whose *abba* scheme continually loses and finds itself, pungently near the mark or plaintively far from it:

And thus, as death serves as a hedge
Around life, my imprisoned words
(Yoked to the task, not caged like birds)
Keep to the center, keep their edge.

The clipped stanzas and ironic elegance, even the bitter playfulness of these poems, serve both to control and to contour the deep emotion that is their pretext. And because they are closer to the bone than many of Hollander's earlier poems, there is even an occasional tentativeness.

None of the adulterous melodrama of betrayal and recrimination that mar so

many contemporary poems of domestic life applies here. The tone is rather one of brave bewilderment: "For me the sentence has come first, / The verdict will emerge in time." Because he is a writer for whom the literature of the past is not a study but an instinct, it is likely that Hollander had Hardy in mind while writing "In Time." Like Hardy, he is writing about ghosts. First, about the ghost of the wife who has left him:

Even now, as whole cups of tears
Have dried into the usual air
And I may meet you here and there,
That spirit, moist with life, appears
Where someone else may bathe my wound
In the bright fountain of her smile,
Warming the darkness for a while
In a room shadowed but unmooned.
I see you even in the most
Guarded of places, in her bed
Fucking there with another ghost
Under the bedclothes of my head.

But by the end of the sequence, he realizes they have both become ghosts: "Loss, swallowing its mystery, / Desire, feeding on its end." The real lover is subsumed by the type, our own personalities by the huge emotions stalking them. In effect, these are poems about all sorts of "Departures, losses, even new / Emptyings of a partially / Refilled cup." The poet is concerned here with what we make of nothing, how we compensate and explain—until those explanations take the place of a person and come to be called a poem.

FROM HERE he moves on to an exuberantly complex Nabokovian fable about how we make ourselves up. "In Between" is the book's prose interlude, in the form of a journal-notebook, that book-before-the-book. Montaigne called his journal his *arrière-boutique*, or back of the store. Hollander's witty, paranoid narrator writes his in an invisible ink concocted of

dried tears, some sweat from this morning's fit of anxiety as I peered through the half-open study door and saw the mess of unanswered mail, a bit of fine white wine that had gone beyond all hope and faith, and drops of remembered rain that had fallen once between two touching faces.

It is the very Ink of Experience, applied to each day's fresh page. In Hollander's fable of self-discovery, we are given a glimpse at the primal scene of writing, at those impulses that generate fiction and those fictions that empower life. Hollander's uncanny ability to make the allegorical real and the real allegorical is

everywhere apparent, but let me cite one small episode to stand in for many. Here is his "description" of a room:

There is the bed. There are someone else's shoes (and there is no proximate arrangement of two shoes which can avoid emblematic pathos, empty shoes—and perhaps hats—being the only memorials of presence we have now that are unfilled by body the way corpses are emptied of soul). There, the view of Rome on the far wall (a remembered purchase, an outgrown taste, a fantasy on remembered themes exhaled by remembered spots); there, the abandoned novel with the pages still turned down. (What had happened that afternoon that made one stop at "The Marquise chose not to go out, after all"?) All these things have minds of their own, tugging away at our consciousness of them, and doing much of our remembering for us.

THE COMBINATION in that passage of philosophical aplomb, giddy inventiveness, and searching pathos is typical of Hollander's technique throughout. He looks high and low—to a pair of shoes or a novel—for his emblems of experience, and to each he brings the force of the other. The pair of shoes is seen with the intensity of van Gogh's picture of the same motif; the novel is mentioned because it prompted us back into life.

The highlight of the book is its third section, "In Place," a group of 30—what? Prose poems? Fictions? I suspect Hollander himself would want them called *texts*. One of them, for instance—a teasing meditation on painterly conventions called "Dutch Interior"—begins this way:

The light comes in from the window on the left, pearly and clear, but not if one is in the room that is in the picture. No indeed—from within, the light might seem more general, no matter where in the room the windows were, even as the contents of the room would cease to matter very much. The spotty globe, for example . . .

If you squint at the passage, it looks more and more like poetry, and in fact with very little effort can be nudged into Hollander's favored, familiar hendecasyllabic lines:

The light comes in from the window on the left,
Pearly, clear, but not if one is in the room
That's in the picture. No indeed—from within,
The light might seem more general, no matter where
The windows were, even as the room's contents
Would cease to matter very much. The spotty . . .

Why, then, do it as prose? One reason, undoubtedly, is the prompting of his material itself, which is what Aristotle called poetry's counterpart, rhetoric. Rhetoric is both setting and subject for Hollander, the very landscape of his imagination. Then, too, the particular texture and general effect of these pieces are to be distinguished from those of his poetry. Freed from the figurative and rhythmical strictures of verse, from everything that we mean by "time" in verse, Hollander can ply the rhetorical (i.e., dramatic and psychological) strategies of formal speech to render more exactly the give-and-take of the mind's serious play in thinking through its problems, both artificial and real. Prose—its format and flow—allows the poet to deal with experience abstracted to his ideas about it, whether those ideas be theories or memories. It is, finally, the mother tongue of parables.

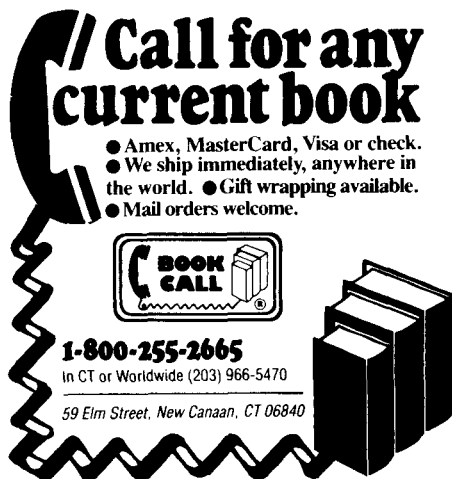
The wonder of "In Place" is Hollander's ability to develop, distort, quicken, or upend our notion of a text and its responsibilities. Invoking the tropes of replacement (metaphor and metonymy) and the ploys of signifying (narration and designation), he has contrived a magic lantern of consciousness itself. Together, the texts convene a symposium on the economy of substitution, the dialectic of space and place, that is at once rhetorical and metaphysical: how things take place, how we find our places and figure out our lives, how the mistakes of imagination commute the sentence of speech. They are set in various defined, even overdetermined spaces: a drawer, a room, a building; the *paysage composé* of a farm or restaurant; a painting, a myth, an echo. They pose as derailed stories, world-weary travelogues, crackpot rationales, still-life en-

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semblances, first impressions, or second thoughts. And they can be extremely funny. But they are usually studded with dark moral reminders—that nothing is got for nothing, that substitution both enhances and erases value, that language is both key and lock, that “the very breaking-up of the radiance that might have for ever remained a deep ground was what will always cause us to have embraced these discrete fragments—turning on and off, fading, ending in a border of darkness—as with the arms of our heart.”

“Discrete fragments” is an appropriate but, at the same time, inadequate term for “In Place.” Its dark borders define an uproarious and reverent center of joy in a fictionality that is the deep ground of myth and belief. One is tempted to go further and say that Hollander is here commemorating the orphic fragments of the visionary sublime, which now are scattered into the contingencies of everyday life and the way we talk about it. East of the word “Eden” was language, the fall into which alone gives us our grasp on transcendence:

And, finally, there is something right about the vagrancy of the replacements. Nowhere can keep us for too long. Let us look at it this way: for want of the fruit the garden was lost, for want of the garden the places were gained, for want of the places new places arrived, for want of new places we dreamed and dreamed. We composed in the tiniest inner room all the chambers of the endless palace, opening on to each other, directly as well as indirectly, off unlit corridors, once entered and left, then lost, even if returned to at a later time and by a route that we could never have known to be circuitous. And each room a place of mistakenness, so much so that while we are in it, there is no way of getting it right. Once left, there is only what we say of it, which is never mistaken.

Hollander has taken some commonplace and made them into the heart's own truth. The lucid difficulties of his work reward continual study. *In Time and Place* again demonstrates by its originality and élan that he is part conjurer and part philosopher, one of our language's true mythographers and one of its very best poets.

J. D. McCLATCHY

J. D. McClatchy teaches at Princeton University. His latest collection of poems is *Stars Principal* (Macmillan).

OPPOSITES DETRACT

A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles by Thomas Sowell

(William Morrow, 273 pp., \$15.95)

According to Thomas Sowell, political opinion for at least several centuries has been polarized between two opposed visions. The “unconstrained” vision regards human nature as rich in moral potentialities that may be realized only through a decisive break with the existing social order. The “constrained” vision considers the historical record as compelling evidence for an essentially unchanging and unchangeable human nature. *A Conflict of Visions* argues that contrasting beliefs on a wide range of subjects follow from adherence to one or the other of these rival visions.

The unconstrained vision thinks there are clear-cut solutions to human problems; the constrained vision believes that there are only “trade-offs” in which all putative solutions come at a high price. In the unconstrained view, human dispositions are capable of becoming more altruistic and more concerned with the general welfare; in the constrained perspective, people are motivated by a self-interest primarily responsive to the incentives of reward or punishment. The unconstrained outlook has limitless faith in the progress of knowledge and reason; the constrained view places its trust in the ancient collective wisdom embodied in custom and tradition and the common sense of ordinary men and women. And so on, as still more contrasts are drawn, ranging from the abstract and general (the unconstrained vision values equality more than liberty, the constrained vision the reverse) to the fairly specific (the unconstrained dispensation favors “judicial activism” in American constitutional law, whereas the constrained view is disposed to stick as closely as possible to the strict letter of the law).

When actual thinkers are considered, the first mentioned representative of the unconstrained vision is William Godwin, who is cited more often than anyone else, always in illustration of that vision. The Marquis de Condorcet comes a distant second. Adam Smith is the first exemplar of the constrained vision, and he ends up in a virtual tie with Friedrich von Hayek as its most cited adherent.

Predictably, Sowell invokes once again the familiar polarity of Rousseau and Hobbes, the former allegedly arguing for man's natural goodness corrupted by society, the latter conceiving of human nature as vicious and anti-social, requiring external coercion to keep it in check. In addition to those already mentioned, the major figures named as exemplifying the unconstrained vision are Voltaire, Paine, D'Holbach, Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, George Bernard Shaw “and other Fabians,” Laski, Veblen, Galbraith, and “a whole school of advocates of judicial activism, epitomized by Ronald Dworkin in theory and Earl Warren in practice.” Additional leading devotees of the constrained vision are Burke, the authors of *The Federalist Papers*, John Randolph of Roanoke, Justice Holmes, and Milton Friedman. Karl Marx is classified as a hybrid, his “theory of history” exhibiting a constrained vision, his belief in the ultimate triumph of communism an unconstrained one. Fascism, too, is a hybrid, constrained in its view of the masses, utterly unconstrained with regard to the leader.

The gist of all these oppositions is perfectly plain. The unconstrained vision is that of welfare state liberals, radicals, egalitarian reformers, and socialists of all stripes: in a word, of the “left.” The constrained vision appeals to conservatives, laissez-faire liberals, and libertarians: in short, to the “right.” Sowell makes some effort to qualify this conclusion. Since the left has so often prevailed in this century, opponents of the welfare state, labor unions, and, “at the extreme,” Soviet communism cannot properly be regarded as “conservative” defenders of the status quo. Also, a few upholders of each vision manifest a common anarchist tendency: Godwin on the one hand and extreme libertarians like Ayn Rand on the other.

Sowell undoubtedly believes that, in the words of his book's jacket, “the purpose of this book is not to choose between the two principal visions of the modern era.” But it would take a very dim reader to fail to perceive that he

consistently loads the dice against the unconstrained vision. Indeed, the book reads for long stretches like a familiar right-wing tract against egalitarianism, statism, the elitism of left-wing intellectuals, legalistic remedies for social problems, and sentimental optimism about human possibilities. Occasionally, the author seems on the verge of acknowledging that it takes both visions to make the world, that truth lies in some synthesis of them, or, perhaps, in a "dialectical" conception of their recurrent interaction. Yet he invariably pulls back, evidently out of an invincible distaste for the outlook of the left.

OF COURSE, the attempt to relate ideological preferences to presumptive underlying conceptions of human nature is scarcely novel. Sowell's frequent citations of Godwin and Condorcet in particular arouse a strong sense of "déjà vu all over again," in Yogi Berra's immortal words. Nowadays those poor fellows seem to get trotted out only when someone wants to assail the alleged hubris of Enlightenment rationalism and utopianism. This was a standard theme back in the 1950s, when belief in "original sin" was very big, even among the non-religious. Its main purveyors, however, were liberals like Reinhold Niebuhr and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., appalled by the deeds of Hitler and Stalin. Sowell avoids any mention of liberals of this kidney, preferring to treat Ramsey Clark and a highly selective version of John Rawls as representative of contemporary liberalism.

Sowell does recall that rejection of the utopian ideas of Godwin and Condorcet in their own day inspired T. R. Malthus to write his famous essay on population, which earned for economics the label "the dismal science." Sowell's treatment of Malthus illustrates rather fully the extent to which his own bias intrudes and obscures. "Malthus clearly had a constrained vision," he notes, but "the Malthusian population principle has re-emerged, with modifications, on the political left, among people with an unconstrained vision." These people reject the inevitability of overpopulation, but they do not trust "the discretion of individuals" in holding that "with political leadership, which may range from hortatory to draconian, there is a 'solution' through birth control and abortion."

One gathers that it is not rejection of the constraint of overpopulation as such, but rather trust in "political leadership,"

that makes this view a left-wing and unconstrained one. Sowell must have in mind those Third World nations, such as India, China, and Egypt, whose governments have adopted anti-natalist population policies. Or does he mean official support for birth control and abortion in themselves, which, the latter especially, have been targets of the New Right in American politics? All of the world's advanced industrial nations have sharply lowered their population growth over the past century; this has been the result of the mass practice of birth control and, to a much lesser extent, increased resort to abortion. In the older nations of the West, it was precisely the free choices of individuals, usually in opposition to the law and established religious teachings, that brought about fertility decline. In the newer industrial nations of East Asia—Japan, Taiwan, South Korea—government anti-natalist policies have played a major role in encouraging birth control and abortion. But these nations are usually cited by conservatives as recent examples of capitalist success stories. Sowell's animus has prevented him from giving much serious thought to the relationship between fertility levels and economic growth.

While the pessimists of the 1950s wrote in recoil from the horrors of totalitarianism, Sowell's doubts about politically directed progress stem rather from his faith in the free market. An undertone of "economics good, politics bad" sounds throughout his book. Like so many neoclassical economists, he never ceases to marvel at the way multiple individual choices dictated by the most narrow and immediate considerations produce results that are socially beneficial in the aggregate. Economists and their non-professional readers often become so enamored of the hidden logic of the market, like children with a new Tinkertoy, that they seek to extend it to all of social life. Sowell equates the undesigned, self-equilibrating workings of the market with the Burkean vision of an "organic" traditional social order evolved from the slow accretion of customs and institutions through the ages.

This has the effect simply of papering over the long-standing division among modern conservatives, especially in America, between supporters of capitalism and the technological change, economic growth, and spirit of indi-

vidualism it promotes, on the one hand, and traditionalists longing for a stable, religiously sanctified social order permeated with, in Burke's phrase, the "unbought grace of life," on the other. Moreover, if the unregulated market produces, as it does, ceaseless transformations of everyday life, continually rendering obsolete goods and practices that were cherished just yesterday, it is hard to see why contemplating modest reforms of a non-material kind in the way people live should be regarded as evidence of a feckless, unconstrained vision of human life. Most of Sowell's apostles of the unconstrained vision are not, be it noted, root-and-branch revolutionaries or star-struck utopians, but moderate liberals, social democrats, and pragmatic reformers.

Political action aiming at social change is usually inspired not by abstract ideology but by protest against real conditions experienced as oppressive, sometimes to an intolerable degree. The notion that purposeful interventions in the workings of the market or modifications of received traditions have their origin in rosy visions of untrammelled human possibility is nothing but a pinched conservative prejudice. Hopes and expectations of what change will bring may, to be sure, lose touch with reality. But, as Max Weber, who was no utopian fantasist, observed, "Man would not have obtained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible."

Like other contemporary conservatives and neoconservatives, Sowell seems to think that what he sees as insufficient appreciation of the wonders of the mar-

JOY RIDE

Play is the handiwork of wear.
Play is the interval between
twisting the wheel and steering the car.
The older we get, the longer it takes.
The less we care to turn, the more
we crouch, ecstatic at our table,
twiddling our empty dinner plates.

Play is the distance between design
and execution. Toujours gai,
we're making time. Freewheeling down
a vast deserted interstate,
we execute a thousand twirls
and pirouette with the tips of our fingers.
The older we get, the longer we play.

DONALD FINKEL

ket results from a preference for a totally planned, or a command, economy that dispenses with the market altogether. This is ridiculous. It is caricature even if applied to Moscow and Beijing, let alone to American liberals and European social democrats. The real issues have to do with the kinds and the degrees of regulation to which the market should be subject, with the exact proportions of the ingredients in the mix of the mixed economy. It is neither helpful

nor good intellectual history to represent these difficult and practical issues as arising out of a profound and irreconcilable clash between visions of human possibility.

DENNIS WRONG

Dennis Wrong is professor of sociology at New York University and the author of, among other books, *Population and Society* (Random House).

MIRACULOUS CONCEPTIONS

I See a Long Journey by Rachel Ingalls

(Simon and Schuster, 141 pp., \$14.95)

"Facts can change in an instant," says one of the characters in Rachel Ingalls's new collection of novellas. "You never know when the change is going to come." The speaker, a monk named Anselm, ought to know, for he's recently been visited by the angel Gabriel and has since discovered himself to be pregnant. Fans of Ingalls's celebrated *Mrs. Caliban* (which caused a stir last year when it went from near-obscurity to a place on the British Book Marketing Council's list of 20 great postwar American novels) will recognize both the sentiment and the wry humor of the situation. The oddest things can happen: a tall green monster can appear in your kitchen one night—as in *Mrs. Caliban*—and turn out to be both violent and enormously sympathetic. An angel can descend without warning into the warm, grassy courtyard of a monastery and cause no end of emotional and theological havoc.

But in Ingalls's fiction such incidents don't seem all that odd. After all, both nature and the tabloids are full of such things: a man who drowns simply by drinking too much water, snails and eels that are both male and female at the same time. Oddness is commonplace, Ingalls wants us to see; facts are unreliable. The curious thing—and the focus of these deft and intelligent stories—is the difficulty we humans have when it turns out that things aren't quite what we thought.

When illumination comes in these sto-

ries, it tends to come suddenly. In the first, a gun goes off and a young woman's perceptions—her sense of protection, her anticipation of romance—turn out to be utterly unfounded. All three stories have moments of that sort; in this sense they are, as the title of the British edition has it, "Three of a Kind." But the sort of turn events take in each story is distinctive, so that together the three novellas make up a carefully nuanced and increasingly detailed study of comprehension.

The first story turns on Flora's inability to perceive her actual status in the wealthy family she's married into. Ingalls hints at the family's callousness (when the cook's niece is mistaken for a member of the family and is kidnapped, they pay the ransom and get the girl back, reasoning that "good cooks weren't easy to find. But they'd cooperated with the police, which they wouldn't have dared to do if [their own daughter] had been the victim"). She even suggests that something drastic is about to happen to Flora (why else would a couple leaving for a two-week vacation have a series of parties "to say goodbye"?). Yet we, like Flora, tend to overlook these things; Ingalls expects and exploits her readers' capacity simultaneously to see and not to see. When that gun goes off, we too are shocked and disconcerted. Yet we can accept, in retrospect, the inevitability of what happens.

Setting up a story this way takes great

skill, but in terms of plot it's relatively simple: character misses the point and then gets it. Events both before and after the gunshot are entirely plausible; Ingalls's attention is on demonstrating how Flora's—and our—perception of them alters. The second story, "On Ice," stretches the boundaries of the plausible, turning on a revelation that comes closer to the fantastic.

Again, the situation seems innocent enough. Beverly, a young American on vacation with her German boyfriend, does not (unlike Flora) misread what's around her. Her perception of her standing with Claus, her sense of distinction from other vacationing Americans seem more or less accurate. Yet she too finds her known world suddenly shifting beneath her.

She runs into an acquaintance and is invited to join a group of the wealthy elderly having tea in an elegant mountaintop hotel. When she does, though, she has "for a moment a sudden sense of isolation and strangeness. If she could have thought of an excuse, she'd have asked to go back." During tea, that vague sense of oddness coalesces into a specific doubt: Hadn't she gone to her hostess's funeral years ago in St. Louis? Thus disoriented, Beverly "felt her comprehension slipping." By the time she regains it and rearranges the facts, it's too late. She understands, but she's trapped. Comprehension for Flora brings a certain sad serenity, but for Beverly it brings sheer misery. Dazed and sniffing, she recognizes her fate: "Never in her life to see Claus again, or to get back home, to see her family; her body and her life unused and unknown." She's done nothing wrong, merely stumbled upon something previously outside her ken. It is the timing of her understanding that undoes her. Had she understood sooner, Ingalls suggests, she could have evaded her unhappy fate; had she never understood at all, she might have been allowed to return to the life she knew.

The flaws in these characters' discernment—Flora's so limited, Beverly's fatally ill-timed—infuse both stories with a sense that tragedy, given our thick-headedness, is not at all unlikely. But Ingalls's outlook is not unrelievedly tragic—in both stories she confronts humanity with a mixture of tartness and tolerance. In the third, these attitudes are in perfect tension. Moving now more completely into the realm of the fantastic, she invents a situation that allows her both to unleash her sharp wit and to

reveal a soft spot for those endowed with innocent grace. Wickedly funny though this story is, it also demonstrates Ingalls's conviction that, even in the most outlandish circumstances, a human being with a special sort of vision can get things right.

The premise of the story, though, is still very funny: a pregnant monk, what a giggle. It's also consciously outrageous, on just about every level one can think of: sexual, biological, moral, and theological. What Ingalls has in mind here is a full-fledged challenge to several varieties of organized thinking, yet she pulls it off with impressive subtlety and lightness of touch.

She begins with the humor of simple incredulity. When Anselm goes, with decidedly mixed emotions, to confess his indiscretion ("Have you sinned?" "And how?"), Brother Francis is appalled but tries to be understanding:

"Who did you say this other young man was?" he asked.

"Gabriel."

"I can't recall a Brother Gabriel in the order."

"He's an angel. I told you. He came—he just landed, and folded up his wings."

"Wings?"

"I still remember the joyfulness, but how can anything be the same again? It was amazing the way he appeared, out of nowhere. And now ordinary life isn't any good. It feels unliveable."

"Wings?" Francis said again.

But even as she exploits the humor here, Ingalls gives sympathetic weight to Anselm's anguish. When he chokes out, "Golden wings. The real thing," and retires tearfully to his cell, she makes us recognize that the issue before us is not fantasy or delusion but faith. Anselm's faith may be conventional, but it is absolute.

And ultimately Ingalls's allegiance is with Anselm. As she depicts the other brothers' struggles to respond to the crisis, to fit this odd event into their ordinary modes of thought, she gives us the sense that they're all missing something. Frederick, the order's furious director, refuses to extend his acceptance of one miraculous conception to the case at hand. The event is nothing but a bureaucratic nightmare to him, an enormous headache for the man in charge. Brother Duncan, the doctor, sees some biological precedent for Anselm's situation—those sexually ambivalent snails and eels he's studied ("Darwin wasn't wrong about everything"). Anselm, he figures, is just

the first human to evolve this particular way.

But no, insists Anselm, he's not just a medical curiosity, the case of Duncan's career. Frederick and Duncan are both unable to imagine what Anselm utterly believes: that he was chosen. His sweet and immutable conviction of his blessedness gives the story its force. When Anselm explodes at a nasty remark from Brother Adrian, his words carry real conviction. "How dare you?" he yells. "How dare you say that about any of God's creatures, much less an angel? We're not sordid. We're good. God made us and God loves us just the way we are, even if we don't always do everything right." Ingalls, we suspect, is wholeheartedly behind Anselm here. We may have a tendency to be blinded by our accustomed habits of mind, but perhaps we're also capable on occasion of a grace that allows us to see what the facts really are.

KATHLEEN KEARNS

Kathleen Kearns is a writer living in Ocracoke, North Carolina.

CORRESPONDENCE, from page 6

CNN'S GOODWILL

To the editors:

Adam Paul Weisman's discussion of Ted Turner's TV diplomacy ("As Ted Turns," December 29) mentions CNN's failure to report the arrests of me and my wife in Moscow during the Goodwill Games. Next follows the name of Stuart Loory, then CNN's Moscow bureau chief, and it leaves the impression that he was somehow guilty in cover-up practices.

Mr. Loory is the last correspondent I would consider to be repressing such news. I saw him, for example, filming sessions about the unofficial peace initiatives in Moscow (of the Moscow Group for Establishing Trust between the U.S.S.R. and the United States) under circumstances that required a great deal of personal courage and professional integrity. He was physically assaulted by the KGB during his attempt to film one of our street actions. He is one correspondent in the front line of reporting who is in no way guilty of suppressing news.

YURI MEDVEDKOV
Columbus, Ohio

PUNK BOURGEOISIE

To the editors:

No, no, NO! Your Washington diarist ("On the Barricades," January 19) has fallen for one of the best hypes in the book—that in England punk was "an identity for the despondent youth of the white working class." It was nothing of the sort; like most British social movements since the war, it came out of the art schools. The Sex Pistols' first gig was at St. Martin's School of Art, the epicenter of revolt-into-style; The Clash were all art students. Alex Cox's superb film shows that John Lydon/Rotten was pissed off with Sid Vicious precisely because he was not what Lydon was—a clever young man who knew a good thing when he saw one.

The youngsters who poured out of the art schools in 1976 to design posters for punk bands are now the people who are making London an economic success. Punk was important because it was the first British social movement for 100 years that was genuinely entrepreneurial. It will one day be proved to be far more relevant to the likely British economic success of the 1990s than Margaret Thatcher.

MIKE ELLIOTT

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

War and Remembrance

WHOSE TORMENT is this? "Today is the anniversary of the murder of thousands of Jews, Poles, Russians, gypsies, and Ukrainians by the Germans. Tomorrow will be the anniversary of the murder of thousands of Jews, Poles, Russians, gypsies, and Ukrainians by the Germans. So was yesterday. So many human beings were murdered in those days of horror beyond grasp that every day truly can be considered an anniversary of the dead." Woody Allen's? Close. These sleepless nights are A. M. Rosenthal's. It was under the Rosenthal regime, after all, that the *New York Times* became one of the primary vehicles of the Holocaust's vulgarization. Day by day, week by week, it cut the Holocaust down, cut it way down, to the size of a cozy occasion for Arts and for Leisure. My favorite instance of the *Times*'s gentrification of the Nazi genocide was a human interest story (an inhuman interest story, really) in last June's paper. It was written by Michael T. Kaufman and datelined "Oswiecim, Poland." The headline read: "For a TV 'Miniseries,' Cameras Roll at Auschwitz." It reported that the production of Herman Wouk's *War and Remembrance* for ABC included the filming of the Auschwitz sequences at Auschwitz. The paragraph recounting that

For the filming here, the Polish extras receive the equivalent of \$12 for each long night of shooting. Some women earn an additional \$50 for appearing nude in crematory scenes and the equivalent of \$183 was paid to women who were filmed having their hair shorn. In preliminary shooting in January, a group of these extras, outfitted with warm underwear under their inmate clothes, threatened to strike unless they were immediately paid by the Polish company that hired them. They also said they would not go into the gas chambers.

must be one of the coldest and most obscene paragraphs ever penned on the subject. Of course the anguish of the actors was dutifully described. But they read their lines, they took their cash, they gave their interviews; and the great let's-give-a-big-welcome-to-the-Holocaust machine rolled on. (Never mind Rosenthal. How did Wouk permit this to pass?)

BUT BACK TO ROSENTHAL. At this early date in the development of his column, it

seems safe to say that he will certainly accomplish a long-overdue revival, uncanny in its fidelity to rhythm and to diction, of the literary style of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Except that Rosenthal does not lack the power to startle. Take, for example, his column of January 10, which began with the commemorative cadences cited above. In a few hundred words Rosenthal proved that sleepless nights may bring sleepful days—specifically, that intimacy with Auschwitz may diminish it, and generally distort judgment. What put Rosenthal in mind of "the reality of the daily anniversary of death" was the shipment of American arms to Iran. I swear. This breaks new ground in the attachment of Auschwitz to everything. No, Richard Secord has not been placed at the scene. Rosenthal has a more odious opponent of democracy in mind: the Ayatollah Khomeini. No, he has not been placed at the scene, either. Still, it is Rosenthal's outrageous claim that the Ayatollah resembles Hitler.

BOTH, IT IS ARGUED, "divide those who live on this earth into the good and the damned, those worthy of life and those not." Indeed they do. But so do the people who killed Michael Griffith in Howard Beach. Shall Hitler be the standard? Rosenthal offers particulars. "The Nazis used racial dehumanization to lead into the extermination chambers. Khomeini's Iran uses its technique of religious demonization . . . to lead to Holy War, murder and death." But this is a difference, not a similarity, that the opinionist is describing. The distinction between racial anti-Semitism and religious anti-Semitism was precisely what marked Hitler from, say, Torquemada. Khomeini is Torquemada—a familiar figure. Hitler was, let us say, an unfamiliar figure. In his field, he innovated. Finally, in a seizure of Reaganite sloppiness, Rosenthal observes more topically that "the very idea of hostage-taking, turning humans into objects of political trade, is sanctified dehumanization." There we are. Hitler, too, was guilty of . . . terrorism. This must be 1987.

WE MAY QUANTIFY, alas, the difference between the Ayatollah and the Führer. Rosenthal's column reminded me that I

did not know the precise number of political killings for which Khomeini has been responsible. I called Amnesty International, the grim accountants. I learned that they have verified the deaths of 6,158 innocent individuals at the hands of the Iranian theocracy, though the number may be "considerably higher." And from Gordon Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945*, p. 714, I learn that Hitler was responsible for the deaths of 18 million "non-combatants." That means that Hitler was 2,923.0269 times as evil as Khomeini. But let's not be kind to the Ayatollah. Let's assume angrily that the "considerably higher" number of the Ayatollah's crimes is ten times higher, that there have been 61,580 victims in Iran. That means that Hitler was 292.30269 times as evil as Khomeini. Of course I have omitted Khomeini's war, in which sickening numbers of men and boys have died on the battlefield. But then 17 million died (according to Craig) on Hitler's battlefield. I shall spare us all that calculation. I do not make these heart-crushing calculations to be wry. I make them to restore respect for Adolf Hitler. Anybody who thinks that I have done a defense of the Ayatollah is a fool.

I HAD EXPECTED to hear any day now about Patrick Buchanan's old and deep feelings for the Jews. In that way, I thought, the Jesse Jackson of the Republican Party will not resemble Jesse Jackson. But Buchanan won't run. Still, he should not be allowed to escape the locution with which he concluded a recent defense of John Demjanjuk in the *Washington Post*. Buchanan believes sincerely in Demjanjuk's innocence. Fair enough; there are worse things to be than wrong. But Buchanan concluded that "John Demjanjuk may be the victim of an American Dreyfus case." Is the moral idiocy of that moral equivalence not plain? Poor Dreyfus, after all, was not the only unjustly accused man in history. For this analogy Buchanan had to reach. Its implication, quite simply, is that anti-Semitism and anti-Nazism are just two prejudices. Buchanan gave up the race just as I was about to place the name of this friend of Ukrainian nationalism in nomination for the Hymie award for 1988.

L. W.



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